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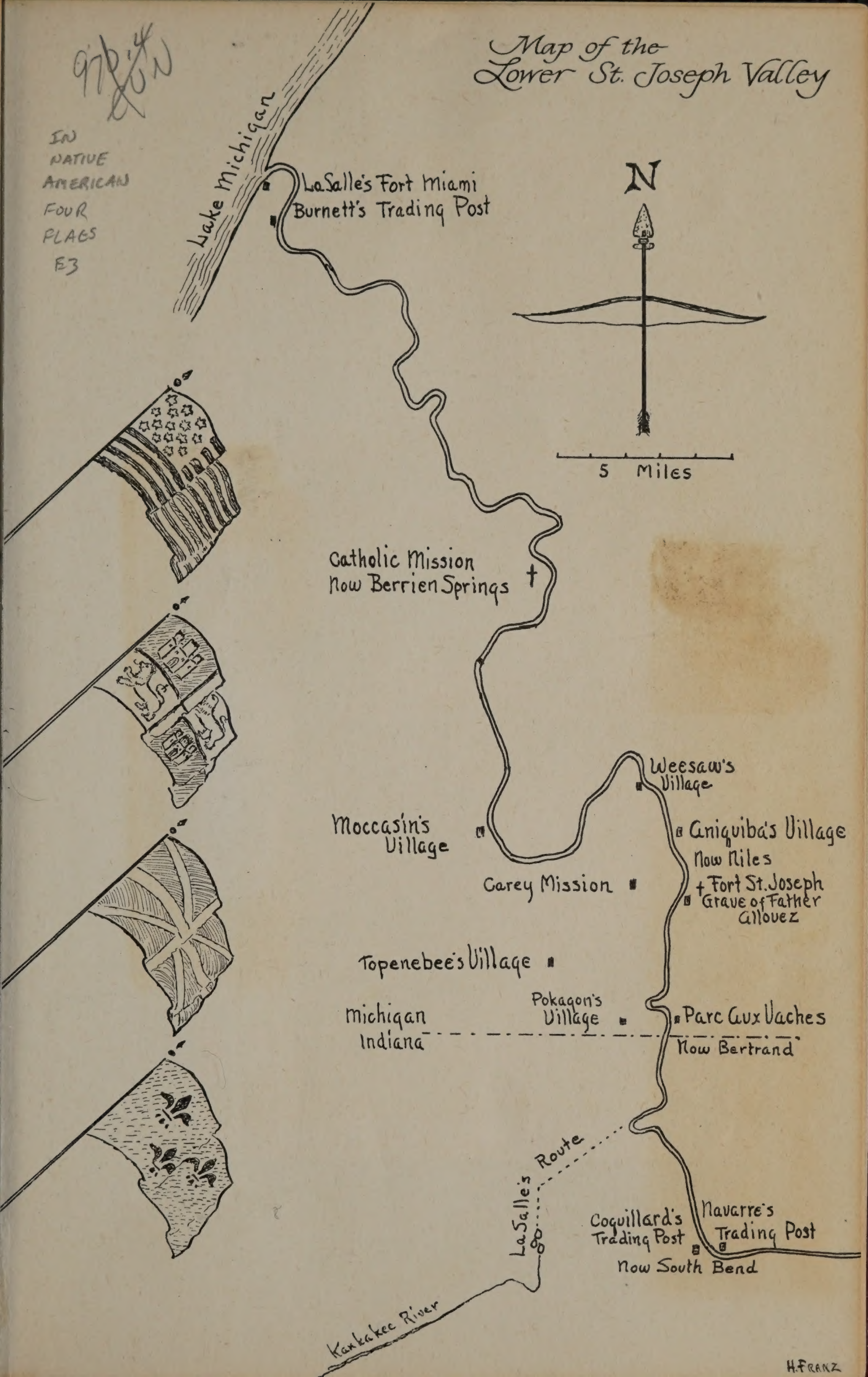

Map of the Lower St. Joseph Valley

N
5 Miles
Lake Michigan
LaSalle's Fort Miami
Burnett's Trading Post
Catholic Mission
Now Berrien Springs
Weesaw's Village
Aniquiba's Village
Now Niles
Moccasin's Village
Carey Mission
Fort St. Joseph
Grave of Father Allouez
Topenebee's Village
Pokagon's Village
Parc Aux Vaches
Now Bertrand
Michigan
Indiana
LaSalle's Route
Coquillard's Trading Post
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LAND OF FOUR FLAGS

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LAND OF FOUR FLAGS

An Early History of the St. Joseph Valley

by Wilbur M. Cunningham

Pen Drawings by
Harvey Franz

William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company
Grand Rapids, Michigan

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First Printing, December 1961
Second Printing, April 1962
Third Printing, May 1962

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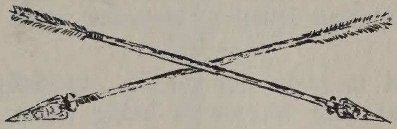
ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
1962

Affectionately dedicated
to
my wife, OHC



FOREWORD

The St. Joseph River Valley, and especially that portion located in Berrien County, is very rich in early history. In fact, it is the only part of Michigan once claimed by four nations. Many books have been written that record historical events, but most of these books are not available to the average reader. There is, moreover, no concise condensed history in one small volume to interest the casual reader and encourage him in the further study of the more complete records.

Someone has said that nobody has changed the course of history as much as historians. Because some of the histories have been loosely written, and the information given has been sketchy, there is much disagreement as to dates and other facts. In the present work, an effort has been made to untangle the many conflicting statements of writers and to harmonize the dates and facts as nearly as possible.

It seems regrettable to a student of history that so little interest in the past has been shown by the public, especially when a knowledge of the extreme hardships and privations of the pioneers might make each of us more appreciative of our many advantages and at the same time enrich our lives.

So this small volume is written in an effort to pluck from the glorious tapestry of history those threads twined around purely local happenings and local individuals, with the hope that many will read, and by reading become encouraged to delve deeper into the interesting events which occurred on our very doorsteps. It is hoped this book will interest the historian who expects dates and places to be pinpointed, as well as the average reader who is not enough interested to go to the original sources which are scattered and difficult to obtain. An effort has been made to do the impossible, that is, to give the history student dates and facts without being so technical as to discourage the average reader.

If it will tend to make the public, especially the younger generation, realize that history is being made right in each community every day, perhaps the study of this history will become more interesting and palatable to the student.

Boyce House has aptly stated:

> History is anything important and significant which has happened. It might have been in 1492 or it might have been yesterday. And history is not just the doings of generals and politicians. Wherever men have planned and played and plowed, wherever they have smiled and sung and splendidly swaggered, wherever men and women have wooed and wed and worked and worshipped, wherever they have dreamed and died — there is history.[1]

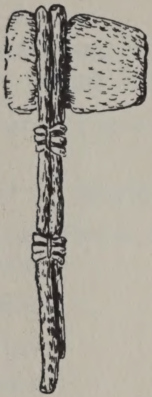
No claim is made that the material used in this history is original with the writer. It has been obtained, as much as possible, from old and original sources, some of which, as far as is known, have never before been published, and an attempt has been made to classify it to make it more readable.

The casual reader may ignore the footnotes. They are important only to those whose interest has been aroused and who have the desire to supplement their reading.

I extend my grateful appreciation to Mr. Harvey Franz, not only for his helpful assistance, but also for all the art work from his pen; to Mr. Amos Green for his constant co-operation, his personal interest and his many contributions; to Mrs. Lucille

Ross for the many times she has typed, retyped and revised these pages; to Dr. Alan S. Brown for his valuable suggestions; and to my wife, who has patiently endured the travail of a writer's helpmate.

My deep-felt thanks to many, many others who have given freely of their time and talents in an attempt to make this book worthwhile.



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Reference is cited by author's name. See Bibliography for title and publication data.

1. Boyce House, 165.

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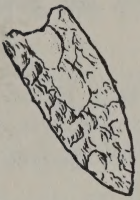
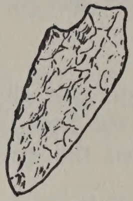




GENERAL INTRODUCTION AND SOME NOTES ON THE INDIANS OF THE ST. JOSEPH VALLEY

"In the beginning" seems to be an appropriate way to commence a short history of the St. Joseph Valley and surrounding areas, so it may be well to delve for a moment into that remote period before written history and the arrival of the white man.

Mounds constructed by the so-called mound builders, whom scientists refer to as Hopewellians, and the remains of the world-famous garden beds found near Berrien Springs, Michigan, give mute evidence of prehistoric dwellers. These garden beds were so designated because they were often in the shape of formal European gardens. They are found nowhere in the world except in Michigan and Wisconsin, and one group in Georgia.[1]

How long these prehistoric dwellers occupied this territory before the arrival of the white man, no one can state with certainty. However, from a recent (1959) Indian burial disinterred at the Kimmel site near Berrien Springs, Berrien County, Michigan, it has been estimated that this individual was buried shortly before the birth of Christ.[2]

Fluted flint arrows found in this locality, similar in some respects to the Folsom points of New Mexico, point to an occupancy from 12,500 to 13,500 years.[3] So-called Sandia points, or one-shoulder arrows, also found in this area, indicate an occupancy of possibly 20,000 years or more.[4]

> *The ancient arrowmaker*
> *Made his arrowheads of sandstone,*
> *Arrowheads of chalcedony,*
> *Arrowheads of flint and jasper,*
> *Smooth and sharpened at the edges,*
> *Hard and polished, keen and costly.*
> —HIAWATHA

The Sauk name for the St. Joseph River was "O-sang-e-wong-se-be," or the Sauk Indian River. It was so named because legend had it that the spirit of a Sauk Indian wandered along its banks.[5]

The Potawatomies called the lower portion of this river "Sawk-wawk-sil-buck" or "Sauk-wauwk-sil-buc," which means, "the mystery," and was so named on account of the fact that the river (because of its steep banks) raised suddenly after a heavy rainfall.[6]

There is plenty of evidence that buffalo, caribou, moose and elk roamed this area as well as prehistoric giant beaver, mammoths and mastodons.[7] In 1924 the records showed that the remains of at least twenty-eight mammoths had been found in Berrien County and many more may not have been recorded.[8] Others have been found since. The skull of a giant beaver was found seven feet below the surface, a mile and a half east of Niles, Michigan, on June 19, 1920, when a sewer was being dug at the Michigan Central Railroads yards. It is now in the South Bend, Indiana, museum.

An interesting and unusual find was made in 1950 about one mile north of Riverside in Hagar Township, Berrien County, Michigan. The skull of a mastodon was unearthed and nearby the tooth of a mammoth was dug up. The skeletons of these animals are seldom closely associated. Mastodon remains are generally found in marshy areas and those of the mammoth on firmer soil.

Part of an antler of a prehistoric cervalces (a giant moose) was found in Berrien Township, Berrien County, Michigan, in

1951. This find was reported by Hibbard[9] in 1958 and is the only find of the kind known to have been made in Michigan. Only fourteen such finds had been reported on the whole North American continent as of that date.

Lake Michigan was first named "Lake of the Stinking Water" because the people who lived on its shores were known as Paunts (stinkers), not because they had an objectionable odor, but because they were said to have come from a salt-water sea far to the north, although Hodge states they acquired that name because of their fondness of bathing in foul water.[10] Later, this lake was known as the Lake of the Illinois[11] because it afforded access to the country where the Illinois tribe of Indians lived.

Father Claude Allouez reached this lake on the eve of the celebration of the holy day of Saint Joseph and gave it the name of that great saint.[12] Father Marest was one of the first to call it Lake Michigan.

After the Jesuit Allouez designated what is now Lake Michigan as Lake St. Joseph, the St. Joseph River may have so derived its name after it was first known as the River of the Miamis. By 1706 the Miamis had removed from the lower St. Joseph Valley.[13] This tribe was usually designated as Twightwees, meaning "the cry of the crane."[14]

After the Miamis left the country in 1681, they returned ten years later but were driven out of this area in 1706 and 1707; and the Potawatomies, then located in the vicinity of Green Bay, Wisconsin, began drifting in and gradually took possession, between 1679 and 1707.[15] Potawatomie means "People of the Place of Fire" or "We Build a Fire."[16] Another writer states that the name is a compound of "Put-ta-wa," signifying a blowing out or expansion of the cheeks, as in blowing a fire, and "Me," a nation, meaning, "A Nation of Fire Blowers."[17] The name of this tribe has been spelled in many different ways, but the spelling used here has been adopted by the United States Bureau of Ethnology and the Indian Bureau.[18]

The principal tribes in the lower St. Joseph Valley were the Miamis and Potawatomies. While these tribes moved about and continuously shifted their positions from time to time, in a very broad and general sense the Potawatomies were located at different periods along the western shore of Lake Michigan from Green Bay, south, northern Indiana and the southern part of Michigan's lower peninsula. The Miamis lived in the region lying west of the southern end of Lake Michigan as far west as the Mississippi, which would include southern Michigan, Indiana and part of Illinois.

It has been asserted that the Potawatomies were not a bloodthirsty tribe, but were brave and hardy warriors. They were, as a rule, friendly to the whites, especially the French, even though they fought the white man in many battles, including Pontiac's uprising and the Battle of Tippecanoe.

The following story indicates that there may have been exceptions to their friendliness. It was told by John Long.[19] Traders related the tale to him. Long declared:

> The Poes (Potawatomies) are a wild, savage people, having an aversion to Englishmen and generally give them as much trouble as possible in passing or repassing the Fort of St. Joseph, where some French traders had settled by their permission.

A Mr. Ramsey and his party were invited by the savages to land their canoes at or near Fort St. Joseph. Three of the warriors waded neck-high in the water and dragged Ramsey ashore. His men deserted him. He was then tied to a stump. The Indians took as much rum from his canoe as they thought they could consume and began drinking and singing their war songs. They built a large fire near the stump to which Ramsey was tied, and sat down and began to insult and taunt him, as was their custom. The Indians kept on drinking, and piling wood around Ramsey, preparing to set fire and burn him when they were ready. He was forced to partake of his death-feast meal which consisted of dog, tiger-cat and bear grease, mixed with wild oats.

To gain time, Ramsey asked permission to make a speech before he "changed his climate," meaning before he was killed. In the meantime, Ramsey's brother had been constantly filling the kettles of the savages with rum. When Ramsey decided that they were so intoxicated that they were incapable of doing mischief, his brother cut the cords that bound Ramsey and they both poured rum down the throats of the captors until they were insensible. They then loaded their canoe, methodically cut the throats of the savages, and struck out for Michilimackinac, determined never to visit Fort St. Joseph again.

The principal bands of the Potawatomies at the time they lived in the lower St. Joseph Valley had totems of the crab, frog, turtle and carp.[20]

One small tribe, seldom mentioned in local history, called the "Mush-quah-tas" (also spelled Musquakees), a branch of the Fox Tribe, was located for a short time on the St. Joseph River. In the early days this tribe lived in Emmet County, Michigan. Their name signified "The People Who Roam Over the Prairies." On one occasion they unfortunately incurred the wrath of the powerful Ottawas and at daylight the next day the Ottawas and their friends, the Chippewas, attacked the small village at Seven Mile Point and massacred all but one person, who escaped. The remnants of the tribe, who were living outside the village, then moved to the St. Joseph River. For some time they were safe, but the Ottawas, armed with guns, finally crushed the tribe and the few survivors were scattered among the neighboring tribes.[21]

CHIEFS OF THE POTAWATOMIES

The exact status of an Indian chief is uncertain. He had no real authority over the members of his band; that is, he could not order his warriors to battle. If a group of Indians decided to go on the warpath, all good and well. But if some warrior had a dream interpreted by him as not being auspicious to his undertaking, it was no disgrace to forget all about his war party and return to his camp. It may be that in many cases his dream was simply an excuse to discontinue a hazardous undertaking.

In some respects, however, the advice of the older, wiser men of the band was sought and followed, but it was accepted only if the advice suited the wishes of those who sought it.

The chiefs of the Potawatomies were the prominent citizens of their era, the VIPs, and each would have made *Who's Who* if that publication had been in existence at that time.

Aniquiba was an early-day chief and in 1776 occupied his village where the City of Niles is located. He was the father of Topenebee and Kakima, but history records practically nothing about him. His village was probably on the flats just north of old Fort St. Joseph.[22]

CHIEF TOPENEBEE

Chief Topenebee (spelled many ways, and pronounced by a descendant as Toe-pin′-a-bee) means "A Quiet Sitting Bear." Williams says his Indian name was Doo-k-jub-ii.[23] He was the great war chief of the Potawatomie tribe in this area for forty years, and a son of Chief Aniquiba. He was a brother of Chief Chebass.* His village in 1795 was located in the northwest

*Topenebee's daughter married Shabbona, grand-nephew of Pontiac and chief aid of Tecumseh. During the War of 1812, Shabbona fought with the British until their defeat by the Americans, and then transferred his allegiance to the Americans.

quarter of the southeast quarter of Section 5, Bertrand Township, about two miles west of what is now the City of Niles. It was afterwards known as "Swoptuck."[24]

Chief Topenebee, representing "the Pottawatimas of the River St. Joseph" signed the important treaty at Greenville, Ohio, on August 3, 1795; one on July 22, 1814, at the same place, and others in 1818 and 1821.

This chief and Potawatomies from the St. Joseph River took part in the famous battle at Tippecanoe, Indiana, and were defeated by General Harrison's force in November, 1811.[25]

He was present at Fort Dearborn after the massacre on August 15, 1812, and aided in saving the lives of several white persons.[26]

Chief Topenebee succumbed to the temptation of liquor, as did many of the Indians. On one occasion in 1821 when he was admonished by General Cass to stay sober and look after the members of his band, he said, "Father, we care not for the land, or the money, or the goods; what we want is whiskey, give us whiskey."[27] Because he did not, or could not, follow the advice given, he met his death when he was under the influence of ardent spirits. McCoy, who was personally acquainted with Topenebee, states positively on July 27, 1826, that about that date Topenebee fell from his horse while under the influence of liquor and died two days afterwards.[28]

Ellis describes him as "very old" in 1821, and as "the aged chief" in 1825.[29] McCoy was living with or near the Indians at that time and was well acquainted with Topenebee, so it hardly seems possible for him to be mistaken, yet a Topenebee signed at least five treaties after the death of the old chief.

To make it more complicated, Rogers and McDonald make the statement that in 1838 Topenebee was removed to the west with other members of his tribe, and letters in "John Tipton Papers" confirm this.[30] Hodges writes that Topenebee took up lands at Silver Creek with Leopold Pokagon in 1838 and died there in 1840.[31] That there was a young Topenebee is proved by his being granted a quarter section of land in the Wabash, Indiana, Treaty of 1826. He was also mentioned, among many others, as one who had been a scholar in the Carey Mission School. Reed also writes of him as "Young Topenebet, the acknowledged heir of the chieftainship." (See Chapter IX.)

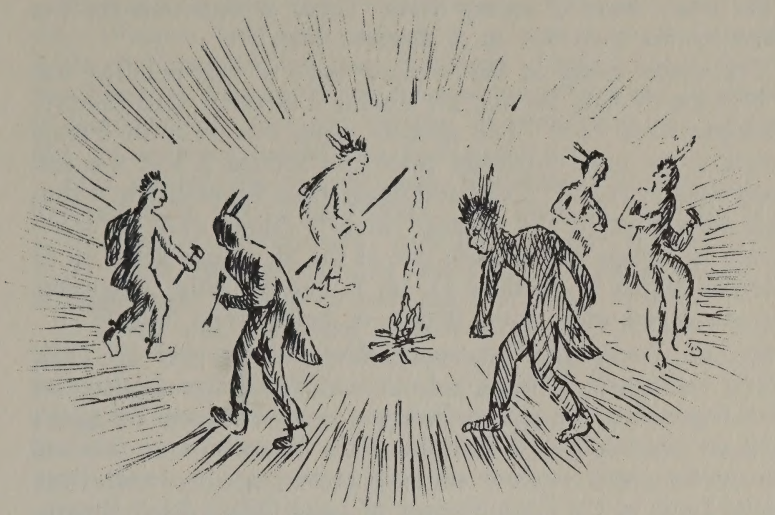
Young Topenebee, son of the old chief, who inherited the position of chief at the death of his father, at the age of twenty-five years, while in a drunken rage, murdered a popular Indian. It was the custom among the Indians for a male relative of the murdered man to be given the right to seek retribution and kill the murderer. On June 11, 1832, a council was held at Carey Mission and Young Topenebee looked with resignation at the deadly knives of the relatives of the murdered man. Leopold Pokagon attempted to make peace and spoke to the council in an effort to intercede for Topenebee. Then Father Badin's interpreter, Madam Campeau, who was loved by the Indians, also endeavored to avert his death, finally offering her own life by saying, "Kill me, I stand here to be killed in lieu of Topenebee." The brother of the murdered man relented and he and his relatives finally agreed to accept gifts instead of the life of Topenebee and both the Indians and whites contributed in order to assist Topenebee in paying the price agreed upon.

This chief has the rare distinction of having more Boy Scout camps named after him than any other individual.

CHIEF WEESAW

Chief Weesaw married the daughter of Topenebee. He had two other wives, but the princess was his favorite. She was given the place of honor and walked next behind him, the other wives following her.[32] The name Weesaw signifies, "He, the Torch Bearer." Jimmerson refers to the "Pottawatomie brave" as follows:

> One warm winter day, about the last of January (1835) I stood at Beeson's corner, in the Village of Niles, looking down the street running parallel with the river, and saw a large crowd of men and boys coming toward me. The central object was an Indian of more than ordinary consequence, apparently 50 or 55 years of age, tall and straight as an arrow, with a cast of countenance as grave and dignified as almost to amount to solemnity . . . . He seemed the sagacious lawmaker more than the swift-footed warrior . . . . He wore a shirt of blue cotton stuff, with leggings and moccasins ornamented with many colored porcupine quills. On the outer edge of each legging was arrayed a row of little bells, from the size of an ounce ball to that of a grape-shot, the largest being placed at the thigh, the remainder decreasing in size as they neared the



Young Chief Weesaw leading the dance and thus earning his dollar.

ankle. A snow white blanket, with ornamented borders hung loosely over his shoulders, a large silver broach, nearly the size of a tea saucer, fastened his shirt at the throat; around his wrists and also his arms, above the elbows, were elaborately worked silver bands; from his ears hung large silver drops, or ear rings. His head dress consisted of a white band of otter skin dressed with the fur on; between it and the forehead was thrust a bunch of eagle's feathers, which, with the large silver crescent that assisted in confining them to their place, added greatly to his stately and dignified bearing.

This was WESAW, the Chief of the Pottawatomies.

As he walked along with his crowd of admirers to the village inn, ever and anon answering their inquiries in brief gutturals, with a dignity that bespoke one used to command, he seemed every inch a man, one in whose breast dwelt noble purposes — generous impulses. But sad was the fate of this untutored red son of the forest. But a short time after I saw him in the streets of Niles he was shot by one of his own band, while trying to pacify two of the quarrelsome drunken members.[33]

He was a lover of strong drink. Other writers state he was killed by his own son in a drunken brawl.[34]

The winter camp of the Weesaw band of one hundred was in Newton Woods, Section 29, Volinia Township, Cass County, Michigan, until 1825. The summer camp was on Little Prairie Ronde in the same township, mostly in Section 2, and was still being used in 1825.[35] This band made sugar in the maple woods four miles west of the summer camp.[36] About 1830, Weesaw moved his village to the south side of the St. Joseph River on or near the corner of Sections 15, 16, 21 and 22, Niles Township, and about two miles down stream, or north, from Niles.[37]

By the Treaty of Tippecanoe River of October 27, 1832, which he signed, Weesaw's band was ceded five sections of land, Topenebee, one section, Pokagon, one section and Pokagon's wife, one section.[38] It is doubtful if the Weesaws ever obtained title to the three sections of land mentioned. A letter from Lucius Lyon to the Commissioner of Land Office dated December 26, 1835, reads as follows:

> Understanding that an attempt has been or will be made by two or more persons to obtain from the United States a patent for the three sections of land reserved for Weesaw by the Treaty of Tippecanoe of 1832, I am requested by Mr. C. K. Green of Niles, Michigan, to file in the proper office the enclosed papers to prove beyond doubt that Weesaw, the Indian Chief residing near Niles in Michigan, is the person to whom the grant was made, and I am requested by Mr. Green to procure the patent for said land as early as possible.

On December 27, 1835, Mr. Lyon wrote Mr. Green as follows:

> Commissioner of the Land Office informed me on my arrival here that the location of Weesaw's three sections and nearly all the grants to individuals by the same treaty had been made wrong and could not stand. The objection is that they would be located on lands to which the Indians making the treaty had no special claim . . . . The whole matter has been referred to the Attorney General for his decision, which decision I understand will not be given for some time . . . .[39]

Darias Cook states that Weesaw died in 1836 and later wrote that Weesaw had been buried in a sitting position in the bank of Moccasin Bluff near Buchanan. Legend has it that he was buried in the bend of the river between Niles and Buchanan. It would appear that this method of burial was not unusual. McCoy mentions having seen such a burial.[40]

Even though the records show that Chief Weesaw died in September of 1836, one Weesaw was alive on July 21, 1837, as he attended the council at Lake Ke-waw-nay, Indiana. There is no doubt that the old chief had a son because in one of the Treaties, one Weesaw is mentioned as "Old Weesaw."[41]

It is said that sometimes in time of drouth, Weesaw would kill a deer and cut off the head and neck deep into the shoulders and hang it on the limb of a tree and pray for rain. If that failed, he would kill a dog and burn it and if that method did not succeed he would make the Indians build small fires up and down the bluff for a long distance. By the time all this was done it usually rained.

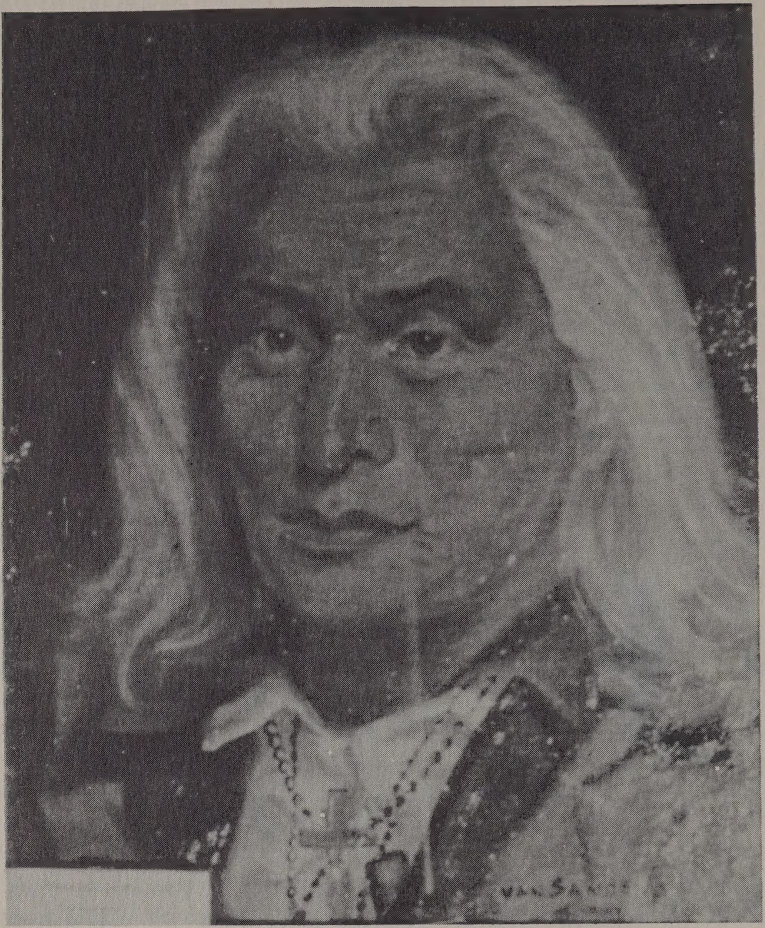
On his return from a trip to New York State he brought back a special seed corn which he planted and replanted every year. He was very proud of it, and one of his last requests to the members of his tribe was never to let his seed corn die out.[42]

It is related that Chief Weesaw, undoubtedly the son of the old chief, attended the council held at Ke-waw-nay Village twenty-six miles from Logansport, Indiana, on what is now Bruce Lake on July 21, 1837, shortly before the Indians were forced to move west, and on the night of the last day of the council the Indians held one of their many dances. Chief Weesaw was called upon to start the dance but he refused to do so until he was paid a dollar fee which he demanded.[43]

If old Weesaw, beau brummel of the forest, were living today, in this age of avid advertising, no doubt he would have long ago left his bark wigwam and would now be lolling back in his easy vibrating chair in the living room of his air-conditioned ranch house, inhaling the smoke from a filtered cigarette furnished by his sponsor the Puffing Tobacco Company and ordering one of his three wives to bring him an ash tray.

CHIEF LEOPOLD POKAGON

After the death of old Topenebee, Leopold Pokagon was chosen as chief. Although he was a nephew by marriage, he



CHIEF LEOPOLD POKAGON

From a painting by Van Sanden in Northern Indiana Historical Society, South Bend, Indiana.

is said to have been treated as an adoptive son of the old chief, Topenebee, even though he joined the tribe as a captive. The old chief had no ability to make speeches. Pokagon was an eloquent orator, and Topenebee was willing for him to do the public speaking for the tribe.

Chief Leopold served as the civil chief of the Potawatomie tribe for forty-two years,[44] and was highly respected by both the Indians and the white men. His advice was often sought. He was first known as Sagaquinick.[45] He has been described as stern, courageous and brave. So far, the writer has found no date or place of birth of Leopold. When he died in 1841, he was said to have been sixty-six years old, so he was born in 1775.

Tradition claims that he was born a Chippewa, but was captured and presented by his captors to Chief Topenebee as a slave.[46] One writer states that the name Pokagon means "a rib." The story is told that when he was captured he was wearing a rib from one of his Potawatomie victims, instead of an eagle feather, to show his contempt for the Potawatomie tribe. Another maintains Pokagon means "the shield" or "the buckler." The fact that he rose from the condition of slavery to that of the civil chief speaks volumes for his ability.

Each important chief had a village of his own and that of Pokagon and his band of two hundred or two hundred fifty in the early days was located on the prairie in the western part of Cass County, Michigan.[47] Later, Isaac McCoy wrote that Pokagon and his band

> had commenced a village six miles from Carey Mission and manifested a disposition to make themselves more comfortable.[48]

This village was located in the southeast part of what later became Bertrand Township in the south half of Section 16 and the north half of Section 21, Berrien County, Michigan, not far from the old Sauk trail and approximately six miles southwest of Niles at the head of Pokagon Creek, and about two miles west of Bertrand. The exact site can be located by the use of the United States Government Survey made by Robert Clark, Jr., a government surveyor, dated December 6, 1835.[49] In his field notes the surveyor mentions Pokagon's log house as square, with a chimney; a Catholic church, a school or mission and twenty houses "scattering" in a clearing of about twenty acres. Pokagon Creek rose in and passed through the village. The huts in this village were crude affairs of poles covered with bark or mats of reeds. They were about ten feet in diameter and about seven feet high in the center. There was a hole in the roof for the smoke from the fire in the middle of the earth floor to escape. This village was occupied only during the growing season for crops and was left vacant during the hunting season.

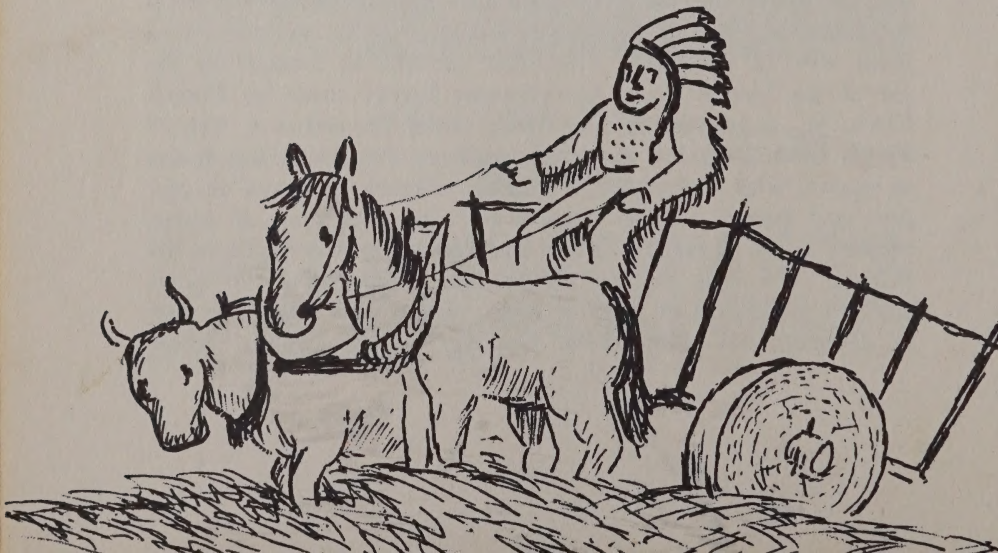
The log house was probably constructed by the men of Carey Mission. McCoy mentioned helping the Pokagon band in building three hewed-log cabins.[50] The Indian knew how to build his wigwam out of sticks, bark and reeds, but the construction of a log house was far beyond his ability. When Pokagon moved to Silver Creek, the Irish settlers did most of the work in constructing the log church there.

Leopold was a devout Catholic and married a niece of Chief Topenebee, a daughter of Sawawk, brother of Topenebee.[51]

Visits from the priests were intermittent until about 1830 when Father Badin arrived and bought a house for sixty dollars which was used as a chapel. It was located on a fifty-acre plot of ground and was nineteen feet wide and twenty-five feet long. Leopold was placed in charge of this chapel. He and his wife Elizabeth were baptized by Father Frederick Rese on July 24, 1830.[52] Leopold has been described by one writer as follows:

> He is a man of good sense, of an honest heart, of a good memory and whose natural eloquence, with the gestures and the voice of an orator, is such that I have seen a number of Indians, attentive, grave and silent during more than an hour when he was addressing them on religion.[53]

Chief Leopold Pokagon's Cart



Pokagon was always friendly with the whites, even though he realized they were eventually to take over all the lands owned by the Indians. On one occasion, a band of Sioux Indians was passing near Pokagon's village and with them was a captured Indian boy. Pokagon bought the boy and paid his captors four ponies, a bridle and saddle. Pokagon was very kind to the child who died a few years after his purchase.

Leopold was a strict prohibitionist and until his death preached against the use of spirits. Whiskey, rum and other ardent spirits were sometimes the bulk of a trader's goods. It was a practice of dishonest traders to get the Indians so drunk that they had no sense of values and then cheat them of their furs and others possessions. Liquor affected the red man more than the whites and when they were under its influence many murders were committed. Their desire for whiskey or rum was so great that on occasions a silver-mounted rifle was traded for seventy-five cents worth of whiskey.

It is said that when Johnny Appleseed came to Pokagon's village, Pokagon hitched an ox and a horse to his two-wheel wagon and took him to the Tippecanoe River. The wagon was a marvel of that time. It had a hay-rack bed, placed on hickory axles. The wheels were solid and painted a bright red.

In the very fine book *The Pokagons,* literally filled with information, it is related that Pokagon was proud of the fact that he was a civil chief. A farmer living near the Pokagon village relates that one day he saw a queer-looking outfit, which could not fail to attract attention, coming along the trail. Seated in a high wooden cart, drawn by a pony, was a big Indian decked out with feathers in his hair and a colored blanket over his shoulders. He was followed by a few Indians on foot. Suddenly, when only about twenty feet away, he stopped and stood upright in the cart for some moments, then he drew his right arm from under his cloak, straightened up, smote his breast two or three times and said, "Me Pokagon, me Pokagon Chief."[54]

He was present shortly after the Fort Dearborn Massacre in Chicago in 1812 and befriended the whites after their surrender. He received the news of the impending trouble when he was in northern Michigan and immediately rode his horse as fast as possible to the fort but arrived after the garrison had surrendered.[55]

Pokagon, at a council held at Carey Mission in 1832, called for the purpose of deciding about joining with Black Hawk in what was called the Black Hawk War, made an impassioned speech warning the Indians of the danger and folly of going to war with the whites. He pleaded with such eloquence that he persuaded his Indians not to take part in that war. This result made the settlers happy as they had commenced to take measures to protect themselves. This meeting is discussed further in Chapter VIII.

With the encroachment of white settlers, the demand for lands owned by the Indians grew greater. The government had been making treaties with the different tribes to acquire more land and in September of 1833, Pokagon's Village was ceded to the government by a treaty signed in Chicago. Pokagon realized the effect the treaty would have on the members of his tribe and as he took the pen to sign the document tears rolled down his cheeks and he said, "I would rather die than do this."

He clearly foresaw the plight of the red man as later Longfellow wove it into words:

I behold our Nation scattered,
All forgetful of my counsels,
Weakened, warring with each other;
Saw the remnants of our people
Sweeping westward, wild and woeful,
Like the cloud-rack of a tempest,
Like the withered leaves of autumn.
—HIAWATHA

In October of 1832, Pokagon and his wife were granted a section of land each by a treaty signed on the Tippecanoe River. He sold this land and he and his tribesmen received $2,000 from the United States Government as their share for relinquishment of their land in Berrien County. With this money Leopold's band purchased nine hundred and fourteen acres of land in Silver Creek Township, Cass County.[56] When the other Indians in this area were forced to take the death march to the west, he and his band were allowed to move to his Silver Creek land in 1837 or 1838.

Leopold died at Silver Creek on July 8, 1841, at the age of sixty-six and was buried beneath the log church he had been instrumental in building with the able assistance of his Irish neighbors. A fine painting of Leopold is in the museum at South Bend, Indiana. One viewing this painting is forcibly impressed by the strength of character shown in his face.

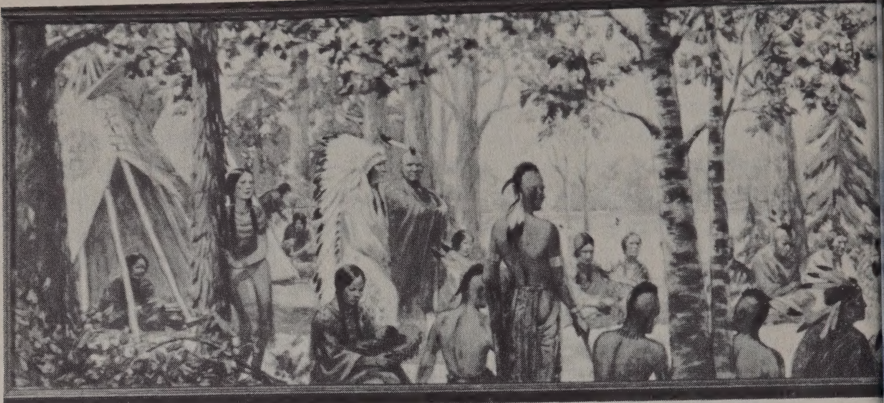
After the death of Leopold, dissension arose among the members of his band. His widow demanded that the Indians give her money so she could pay the taxes on the land bought with Pokagon's money. The Indians had never before been required to pay taxes, and probably didn't understand the situation as they had been in the habit of hunting and living where they pleased and, as a result, about half of the band resented the widow's demands and moved to the shore of Rush Lake near Hartford in Van Buren County, Michigan, where (in 1864), through the efforts of Father Baroux, a frame church was erected to replace the floorless cabin that had in the past been used as a chapel.

It is said that after Leopold's death his oldest son Paul (some say Pete) became chief. Then, when he died, Francis,[57] the next older, became chief; then Simon, who ruled for eight years. It is doubtful that Simon was a hereditary chief at the time of his death. In any event, when the hereditary line ceased, a chief was elected by the members of the band.

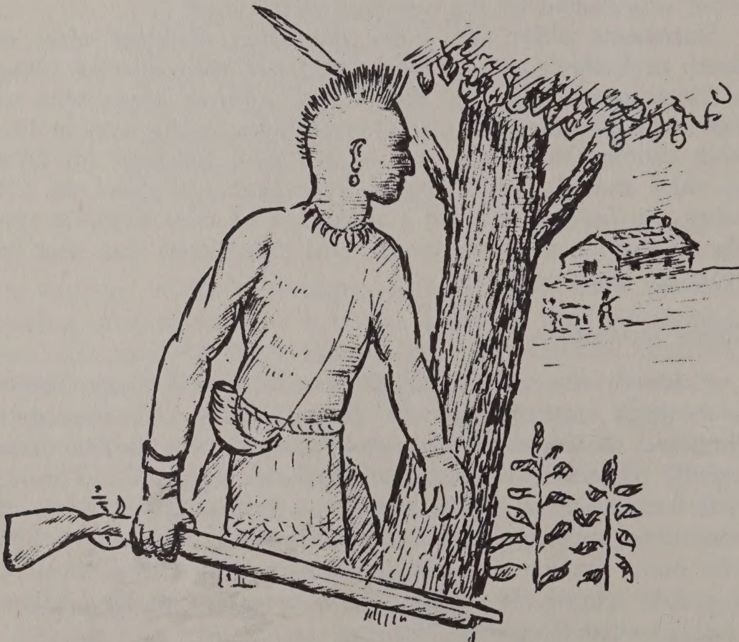
Statements differ as to the succession of chief after the death of Leopold. In personal interviews with Edward Finley, a friend and neighbor of Simon, and Andrew Rapp, who was known as the Chief of the Potawatomies in this area in 1937, both claimed that Peter, son of Leopold, followed his father as chief and Francis followed Peter and was chief in 1866 when the Indians received a settlement of over $100,000 from the United States Government, and that Simon was next and ruled for eight years.[58]

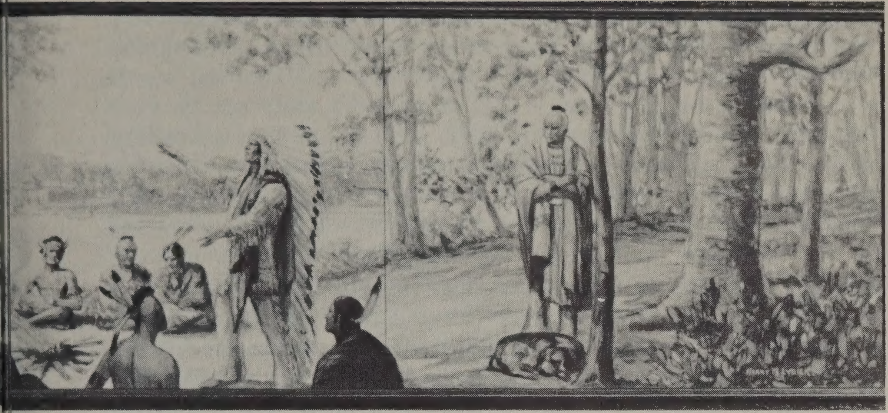
CHIEF SHAVEHEAD

Although this chief's village was in Cass County, he was a frequent visitor in the St. Joseph Valley. He was given the name of Shavehead because he always wore his hair drawn tightly together at the top of his head, in a tuft. This was tied with a string, and sometimes a feather was inserted. He was mean and ugly and had a violent hatred for all whites. His home was in the southeastern part of Cass County on a prairie named after him. Shavehead Lake in Cass County is also named after this chief.



Artist Harry Lydick's conception of a conference between Chief Black Hawk (Courtesy of Harry Lydick, Jr.) In 1812 *Black Hawk traveled from Green Bay, undoubtedly went by way of the great Sauk Trail through Bertrand.*





and Chief Leopold Pokagon, said to have been held at Pokagon's Village. Wisconsin, to Detroit by way of Chicago with five hundred followers. This party

Many stories are related about his mean disposition. The old Chicago road crossed the St. Joseph River at Mottville and was a frequently traveled route. The old chief stationed himself at the river crossing with his gun at his side and demanded toll of everyone who wished to cross the river. One independent settler crossed the river when the chief was away, without making any payment, but upon his return Shavehead was there with his gun in hand and demanded his money. The farmer stopped his team and when Shavehead came up close enough to the wagon he was seized by the scalp lock and given a terrific beating with an ox whip. The incensed farmer took the chief's gun away, fired it, and drove off. After that, old Shavehead never took any toll from a settler crossing the river at Mottville.[59]

Old Shavehead had the habit of going into the homes of white people, especially when only women and children were home, and demanding food and threatening them by laying his hands on his knife in his belt. This resulted in another beating of the surly chief, administered by a settler. Shavehead presented himself at the home of the settler when the wife was alone and demanded that the woman give him some tallow to grease his gun. When she refused, he threatened to take her life but went away without harming her. When her husband returned soon after and learned of what had occurred, he followed Shavehead and administered a sound thrashing.[60]

Another interesting story is that an old basket maker by the name of Job Wright lived on an island in Diamond Lake. He was a recluse and very little was known about him, but it was rumored he had been a soldier and the scars on his face indicated that he had been in battle. One afternoon, according to the story, he was in Cassopolis selling his baskets when his attention was attracted by a partially drunk Indian who was rehearsing some tragic events which had occurred when he was on the warpath. The Indian was old; his hair at the base of his head was shaven off and the rest was gathered and tied in a bunch at the top of his head. The Indian made some remark about Chicago, after which Wright paid close attention to every word. He understood that the Indian was telling of the brutal massacre of the garrison at Fort Dearborn where Indians killed both women and children after they had abandoned the fort and surrendered. The Indian told the fearful tale with all its horrors and boasted of his achievements, even to braining innocent children clinging to their mothers' knees and then striking down the mothers and, with hands reeking with blood, tearing their scalps from their heads. The hermit is supposed to have said, "It is he, I thought so at first, but now I am certain." Just before sundown, when the old chief left the village, the old soldier, a survivor of the massacre, silently took the trail after the red man, with his gun ready. The report was that Chief Shavehead had not been seen nor heard from since that evening.[61]

Another tale is that one white hunter was a great friend of Shavehead and they often hunted together. One day the white man was told that Shavehead had said, "Deer getting scarce, white man kill too many. Injun no get his part. Me stop white man shoot deer." His old friend knew the meaning of this threat, but said nothing. He and the old chief had another hunt shortly after this and at night the hunter returned alone. The story is that the old Indian chief was never seen again.[62]

One of the stories told about him was that he had ninety-nine white men's tongues strung on bark and threatened to have the one hundredth before he died. Oftentimes he boasted of the white men's scalps he had taken in the battle of Frenchtown on the River Raisin and he wore these trophies about his person.

As age advanced, he became but a shadow of the proud chieftain of earlier days and at last he carried a bow and arrow instead of a rifle, begged his food, and shot at pennies, the coin to be his if he hit it.

The truth is probably that the old chief, worn out by poverty, was taken sick near his place on Four Mile Lake and was cared for by the Indians and treated professionally by a doctor of Paw Paw and finally died and was buried in a hollow log in the woods.

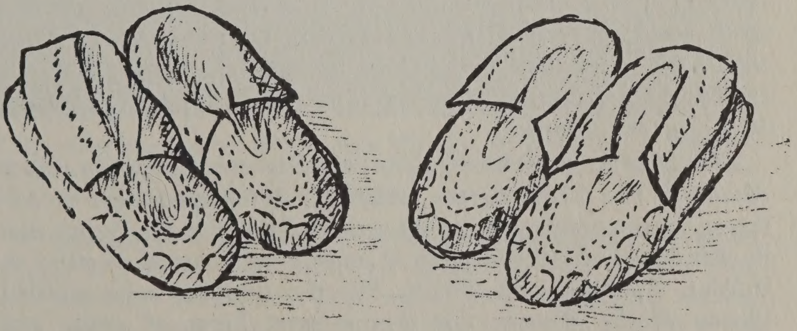
While this surly individual was not one of the most wanted criminals whom J. Edgar Hoover and his men are always seeking, he surely was a constant irritant to his neighbors, and his demise was welcomed.

CHIEF MOCCASIN

The village of this leader was on the west side of the St. Joseph River near the center of Section 23 in Buchanan Township just north of Buchanan and Moccasin Bluff on the low ground between the bluff and the river.[63] There were about three hundred persons in his village when the white settlers began to move in during the early 1800's.[64] He was one of the signers of the Treaty of Tippecanoe River on October 27, 1832. He was sometimes called Porcupine Moccasin. His name on the treaty was spelled Kawk-Moc-a-sin.[65]

Like most of the Indians at that time, he was addicted to the use of intoxicating liquor.

A party of archaeologists from the Museum of Anthropology of the University of Michigan explored the site of Moccasin Village in the summer of 1948. Although no official report



has yet been published, from the artifacts, pottery and fragments of fluted points,[66] and from carbon-fourteen tests,[67] it is estimated that there has been a continuous occupation of this site from the time of Early Man, from 8500 years B.C. to a possible dating of 10,000 years B.C. through the periods of time that archaeologists designate as Paleo-Indian, Archaic, Adena, Hopewell, Fisher, Blue Island, Late Woodland and Western Iroquois cultures or complexes[68] until the removal of Moccasin's band by the government in 1838.

No other area in the whole State of Michigan is so rich in archaeology except the Saginaw area.

Chief Simon Pokagon

Simon Pokagon was the son of Leopold and his wife, and was born in the spring of 1830 while his parents were in the maple sugar camps near the present village of Pokagon in Cass County.[69] His early years were spent at Pokagon's Village in Bertrand Township, Berrien County, Michigan. Engle, Simon's publisher, states that he was born at Pokagon's Village in Berrien County.[70]

After he became twelve years of age, he attended Notre Dame University at South Bend, Indiana, for four or five years, one year at Oberlin, Ohio, and two years at Twinsburg, Ohio. He was considered the best educated full-blooded Indian of his time, reading, writing and speaking fluently English, French, Greek, and Latin, besides his native tongue.

Soon after Simon returned from his studies, he met Lodinaw Sinagaw, whose English name was Angela. She was the daughter of Chief Sinagaw, who later became the first chief of the Rush Lake, Van Buren County band of Potawatomies. Simon spent one more year in school and then married Angela. They then settled at Silver Creek, Cass County, Michigan. Of this marriage, four children were born. Angela died in 1871. Simon later married Victoria.

The Arena, Forum, Review of Reviews, Harper's New Monthly, The Chautauquan, and many newspapers have at different times contained splendid articles from the chief's pen and he was frequently called upon to address meetings of pioneers in Indiana, Michigan and Illinois. He also wrote a book entitled *Queen of the Woods.* He was a great lover of music and was a talented organist.

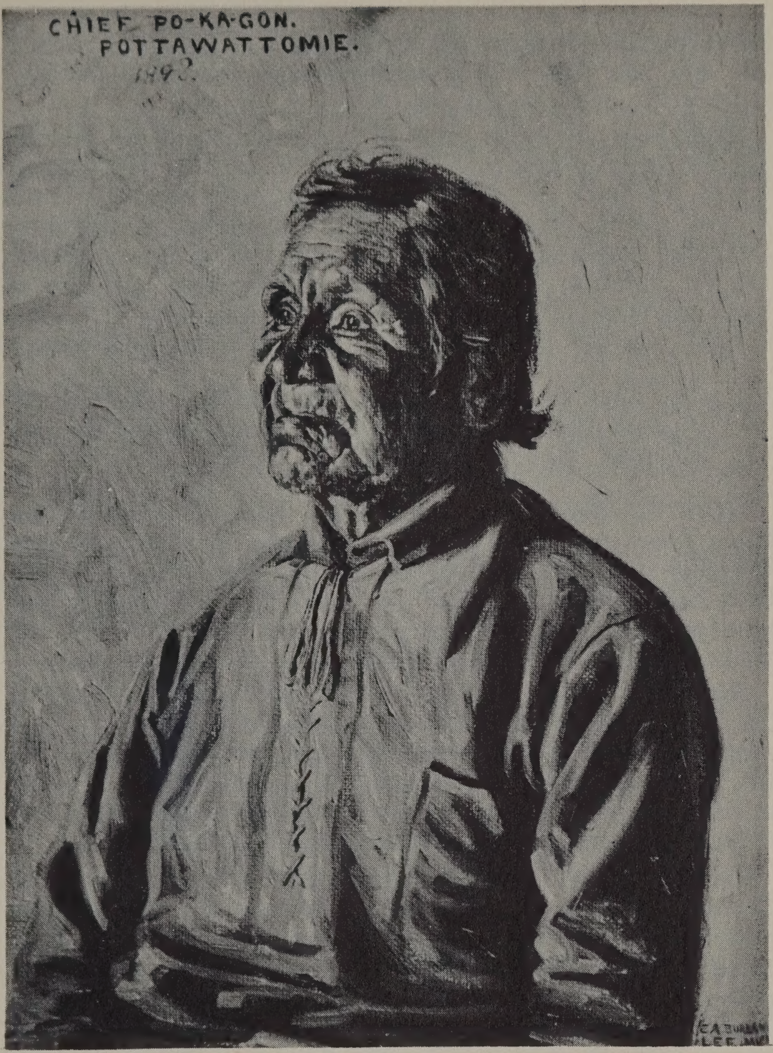

CHIEF PO-KA-GON.
POTTAWATTOMIE.
1898.
E A BURBANK
LEE MICH

Photo from painting of Chief Simon Pokagon by Eldbridge A. Burbank, 1898, *now in Newberry Library, Chicago, Illinois.* (*Courtesy Merriman Memorial Library, Hartford, Michigan*)

Chief Simon Pokagon built a double-layer birch-bark tepee, which for many years was on display in Mr. Engle's yard at Hartford, Michigan. This tepee was constructed mostly as a tourist attraction. It was twenty-four feet high and six feet in diameter. The students at the Normal School at Ypsilanti (now Eastern Michigan University), upon learning that it was for sale, sold tags and acquired enough money to purchase it from Mr. Engle and it was moved to that city.

Simon was invited as guest of honor to attend the World's Columbian Exposition at Chicago Day in 1893 to meet foreign rulers. He gave an address from a platform on the grounds of the World's Fair. That evening in a pageant he portrayed his father delivering the treaty to the United States officials for the purchase of land by the government of the site of Fort Dearborn. This was the Treaty of Greenville of August 3, 1795, whereby the Indian tribes released to the government:

> One piece of land six miles square at the mouth of the Chikago river, emptying into the southwest end of Lake Michigan, where a fort formerly stood.

After the death of Simon's father, Simon's eldest brother Paul (some say Peter) assumed the duties of chief and then the next son Francis followed. By this time there was little need for a chief, so when the honor fell to Simon it was an empty title. For many years the tribe gathered every two years to elect a secretary and Simon was elected many times.

Simon, as a representative of the Potawatomie band of this area, traveled several times to Washington, D. C., and conferred with President Lincoln and President Grant. He was finally successful in securing a settlement of $104,626 in payment of allotments for over a million acres of land sold by the Potawatomie tribe to the United States government.

Chief Simon Pokagon died at Burnips Corners, Van Buren County, Michigan, of pneumonia on January 27, 1899, and was buried at the side of his first wife, Angela, in the Rush Lake burial grounds. No monument has ever been erected on his grave. It is told that he desired none. A persistent legend is that Simon was buried back of the barn belonging to John Mix near Hartford.

Another legend, without foundation, is that Simon's remains were disinterred and spirited away to Chicago, to be reburied there. Perhaps this story had its inception from an offer of the Graceland Cemetery Company of Chicago to provide an appropriate spot for the burial of the renowned chief, accompanied by a plan to erect a suitable monument to be paid for by contributions from schoolchildren.

Simon Pokagon has been aptly described and characterized in *The Literary Digest* as follows:

> He was a man of great moral strength. His appetites and passions were always under the control of an awakened conscience. There was also something of the woman's tenderness and sweetness in a nature that could be stern when wrongs were to be denounced. He was a poet, orator and philosopher. In his orations there not infrequently flashed forth much of the fire and impassioned eloquence which for generations had marked the great chieftains of the Algonquins, and which not infrequently suggest the old prophets of Israel when they fearlessly denounced wrong and injustice. With his death there passed from view one of the noblest children of the red race – a man whose life, thought and deeds proved how closely akin are the noble natures of all races, ages, and times.[71]

Two of the interesting articles written by Simon Pokagon are set forth in the appendix as they are not easily accessible to the average reader.

Ye say they all have passed away
That noble race and brave,
That their light canoes have vanished
From off the crested wave;
That 'mid the forests where they roamed,
There rings no hunter's shout,
But their name is on your waters –
Ye may not wash it out.[72]

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CHAPTER ONE

The Coming of French Explorers, Traders and Missionaries

As early as 1604 the French government followed up the exploratory voyages of Verrazano and Cabot by placing settlements in Acadia (now Nova Scotia). Quebec and Montreal were founded and innumerable expeditions of Frenchmen were sent out to capture the fur trade and plant the flag of France on new territory. Because there were no roads as we know them, and only rough trails through the wilderness, almost all traveling in prehistoric and early historic days was done by water, and the St. Joseph River and Lake Michigan played a prominent part in transportation. The earliest white explorers were traders, priests and adventurers, mostly subjects of France.

There can be no doubt that many white trappers and *coureurs de bois*, fur traders and adventurers floated their canoes on the River of the Miamis and left no written record, so there is a great deal of uncertainty as to the name of the first white man who discovered the St. Joseph River and much difference of opinion exists.

One historical account credits Father Allouez, in whose memory a large cross has been placed near the bank of the river at Niles, Michigan, with discovering the river between 1669 and 1672.[1] Other writers assert that Father Marquette, in April of 1675, crossed from the Kankakee River on the famous portage two and three-quarters miles northwest of South Bend and the members of his party slid their canoes into the River of the Miamis and proceeded downstream to its mouth.[2] It is undisputed, however, that the St. Joseph River was visited, if not discovered, by LaSalle, the famous French explorer, and his party in 1679, at which time he and his party constructed Fort Miami at the mouth of the St. Joseph River, which location was later named Saranac, then Newburyport, and still later became the City of St. Joseph.

Sieur LaSalle was the first Frenchman of historical importance to visit the St. Joseph Valley and claim for France all lands he traveled through. His hoisting of the French flag over Fort Miami marked the formal opening of the vast area to the south and west under the sovereignty of France. It is certain that LaSalle had been told of the location of the St. Joseph River and the portage north of South Bend, Indiana, by an Indian or one of the voyagers, because he outlined the St. Joseph River on his map in 1674, five years before he arrived at its mouth.

It stands to reason that one with the experience of LaSalle would not have made preparations and brought supplies to build a fort at the mouth of the St. Joseph River, and arranged for the landing of the *Griffin* there, without first having obtained definite information about the area and also of the portage near South Bend, between the St. Joseph River and the headwaters of the Kankakee River.

Hennepin, the historian of LaSalle's party, was the first to make a written record of this portage. A historical marker placed on this portage by the Daughters of the American Revolution credits LaSalle and his party with being the first white men to visit that region.

To give the reader an idea of the richness of this area, we quote one writer who in 1718 stated:

> 'Tis a spot, the best adapted of any to be seen, for purposes of living. There are pheasants as in France; quails and paroquets; the finest vines in the world which produce a vast quantity of very excellent grapes. It is the richest district in all the country.[3]

A Mr. Hamburg visited this area in 1763 and wrote:

> The country is level, good soil, and hunting exceeding plenty; such as elks, deer, bears, racoons, bevers, otters, turkeys and other kind of wild fouls in great plenty.[4]

Such fur-bearing animals provided ample supplies for a fabulous rich trade. Settlers did not begin to move in until after the establishment of Carey Mission and after the Treaty of 1833 had been signed, which released the remaining lands to the government.

This treaty, and two others by which the Indians granted land in this area, are discussed more fully in Chapter IX.

That it was considered a paradise is shown by the following verse:

Ask he who thrives the country back?
Let him just ride to Pontiac;
Or take the stage to Washtenaw,
The finest land he ever saw,
Except St. Joseph's, where 'tis said,
Is where the Paradise was laid.
St. Joseph's now is a disease,
Which emigration seems to seize,
And carries off, at sundry times,
Whole families — to distant climes,
Where fertile counties proudly claim
Old Hickory's and Van Buren's name.[5]

The Indian traded furs and maple sugar in exchange for calico, brooches, whiskey and gewgaws but, because of his ignorance, was continually cheated. The story is told that the white trader demanded a pile of furs as high as a rifle was long in exchange for a rifle, and that gradually the barrels of the rifle were made longer in order to acquire more furs in the trade, but there is no foundation for this tale.

The traders' main stock was "Indian whiskey," or sometimes called "fur-trade whiskey." Whiskey was generously diluted with water and then tobacco and red pepper were added to give it the expected kick. The combination of whiskey and Indian was equally as dangerous as a mixture of whiskey and gasoline is today.

Bishop Laval wrote of the overpowering and uncontrollable desire of the Indian for spirituous liquors, as follows:

> Drink is a demon that robs them of their reason, and so inflames their passion that, after returning from the chase richly laden with beaver skins, instead of furnishing their families with provisions, clothing and other necessary supplies, they drink away the entire proceeds in one day and are forced to pass the winter in nakedness, famine and all sorts of deprivations. There have been some whose mania was so extraordinary that, after stripping themselves of everything for liquor, they sold even their own children to obtain the means of intoxication. Children, too, when they were overcome with drink, beat their parents without being punished for it.[6]

A unique currency, or measure of values, prevailed among the fur traders, namely, "bucks" and "does," by which was meant buckskins and doeskins, instead of pounds and dollars. One buck was equivalent to about one dollar. Undoubtedly this was the origin of the slang of today when a dollar is called a buck.[7]

A rule adopted by the followers of Hendrick Hudson, when dealing with the natives, was

> The hand in weighing beaver to be one pound, and the foot ten pounds.[8]

This is similar to the well-known stories of the butcher's thumb. An appropriate saying regarding the fraudulent practices of some white traders in their methods of cheating Indians is, in the words of John M. Gordon, as follows:

> Fraud sticketh between buying and selling like mortar between bricks.[9]

Will Rogers once said, in a jesting tone:

> When the white man wanted more land, all he had to do was go out and shoot another Indian.

There was much truth in that statement.

Father Baroux, Catholic priest who served at Silver Creek, Cass County and Rush Lake Indian Settlement in Van Buren County, related two incidents of the unscrupulous white man's dealing with the ignorant Indian. One trader had some needles in his stock of goods that were very attractive to the Indians.

The trader, knowing his customers, immediately set the price at one dollar for each needle. This amazed some of the Indians who couldn't understand why so small an object was so expensive. The dealer then told them the man who made the needles had died and the ones he had were the last that could ever be obtained, so the Indians, like the bargain hunters of today, bought every needle.

In 1827 an agent of the government tried various schemes to defraud the red man, but without success. At last he offered two hundred dollars for a small space of land just large enough to be covered by a buffalo hide. This offer was accepted even though the Indians could not understand why anyone would pay such a high price for such a small piece of land. After the agreement was signed, the government agent cut the buffalo hide into a fine strip and then stretched it in a large circle. The Indians protested, but to no avail.[10]

There was a constant campaign waged by the French, British and Americans in an effort to secure the services of the various Indian tribes to help fight their battles against each other, first the French against the British and later the British against the Americans. The French and English commenced this practice and the Americans, not to be outdone, followed. But in the long run it was inevitable that the result would be disastrous to the Indian.

Making gifts or loans by the United States government to foreign nations in an effort to acquire their friendship is nothing new in history or in politics. One quaint custom was to pay the Indian a reward for each scalp of the enemy, much the same as some states now pay a bounty for the extinction of predatory animals. Another practice was called "covering the dead." This expression meant that the nation on whose side the Indian fought was expected to make gifts to the survivors for the loss of their comrades in battle. The going wage (or take-home pay) for friendly warriors was sixty cents per day for each man and horse. The chief, if he had twenty warriors, was paid the princely sum of one dollar per day to risk his life for his temporary friends. Medals, silver ornaments and other gifts were distributed generously to obtain the friendship of each chief and his men, and a constant contest was carried on by each nation to outdo the other.

Governor Cass, writing to the Secretary of War in 1814, stated:

> The British medals are solid, ours are hollow. This little difference has injured us more in their opinion, than any other occurrence in our intercourse with them.[11]

This gives an inkling of the intensity of the campaigns.

The whites, to their discredit, inaugurated the quaint practice of paying for the scalps of their white enemies, little thinking that in the next battle their erstwhile Indian friends might be selling *their* scalps to the enemy.

The granting of licenses to traders varied with the post and with the nation in power at that time. In 1746, under the French regime, the cost of a license for a trader was four hundred livres with the express condition that each canoe carry eight hundred pounds for the King. In 1757 licenses cost six hundred francs per canoe and each was required to carry five hundred pounds for the officers and garrisons.

The canoes used were generally made of birch bark or elm bark, large enough to hold from two to fourteen paddlers in addition to freight. The smaller canoes were generally manned by three men and carried a cargo of twenty hundred weight, yet they were so light that one person could carry one over the portages.

When the British took over after the defeat of the French, the intense hatred engendered by the war caused many disturbing incidents. At Fort St. Joseph the Frenchman Louis Chevallier was accused by the British of encouraging an attack by the Indians upon the British traders who were attacked, wounded, and their goods plundered. In 1773 the British commander at Detroit refused to issue any licenses to traders, either British or French, at Fort St. Joseph until the savages behaved better. When the Americans came to power, the requirements before licenses were issued were more rigid. A bond of $1000 was required to insure that all regulations were strictly followed by each trader.

After 1799 an act to regulate trade with the Indian tribes provided that licenses to trade with the Indians could be obtained from any Indian agent, or any army officer commanding a post. The cost was two dollars.[12]

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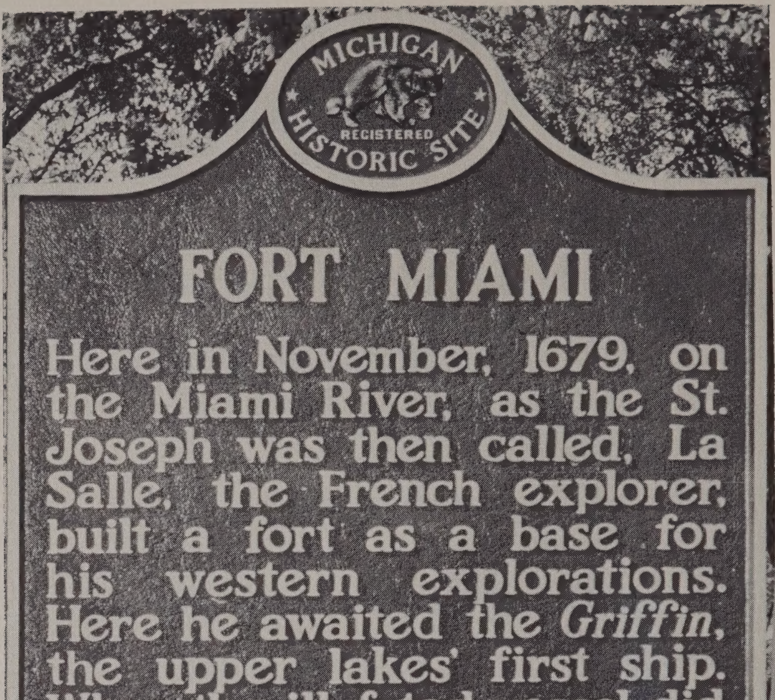
CHAPTER TWO

LaSalle and the Fort of the Miamis

Rene Robert Cavalier, whose title was Sieur de La Salle, was born in Rouen, France, in 1643. He was a young man of strong passions and great energy. He was brought up by the Jesuits. After he lost his patrimony in France, he turned his attention to the French colonies on this side of the Atlantic, about 1670.

The journey down the Mississippi River by Father Marquette spurred this vigorous French explorer on and he at once resolved to outdo the exploit of Father Marquette by following the Mississippi to the ocean in the hopes that a passage might be found to China and Japan, and also with the idea of acquiring vast profits from the fur trade which could be carried on with the tribes along his journey. In addition, he expected to gain high honor and favor by extending the dominion of the King of France. Although three priests were in his party on the first trip to the St. Joseph Valley, the establishment of Catholic religion among the Indians was the least of his interests.



MICHIGAN REGISTERED HISTORIC SITE

FORT MIAMI

Here in November, 1679, on the Miami River, as the St. Joseph was then called, La Salle, the French explorer, built a fort as a base for his western explorations. Here he awaited the *Griffin*, the upper lakes' first ship. When the ill-fated vessel did not come he made his way on foot to Canada through lower Michigan's uncharted wilderness. He returned in 1681 to prepare his great push down the Mississippi. A decade later the French built Fort St. Joseph, some 20 miles upriver near Niles.

MICHIGAN HISTORICAL COMMISSION REGISTERED SITE NO. 6

Historical marker of LaSalle's Fort Miami, west end of Ship Street, St. Joseph, Michigan. (Courtesy of the Michigan Historical Commission)

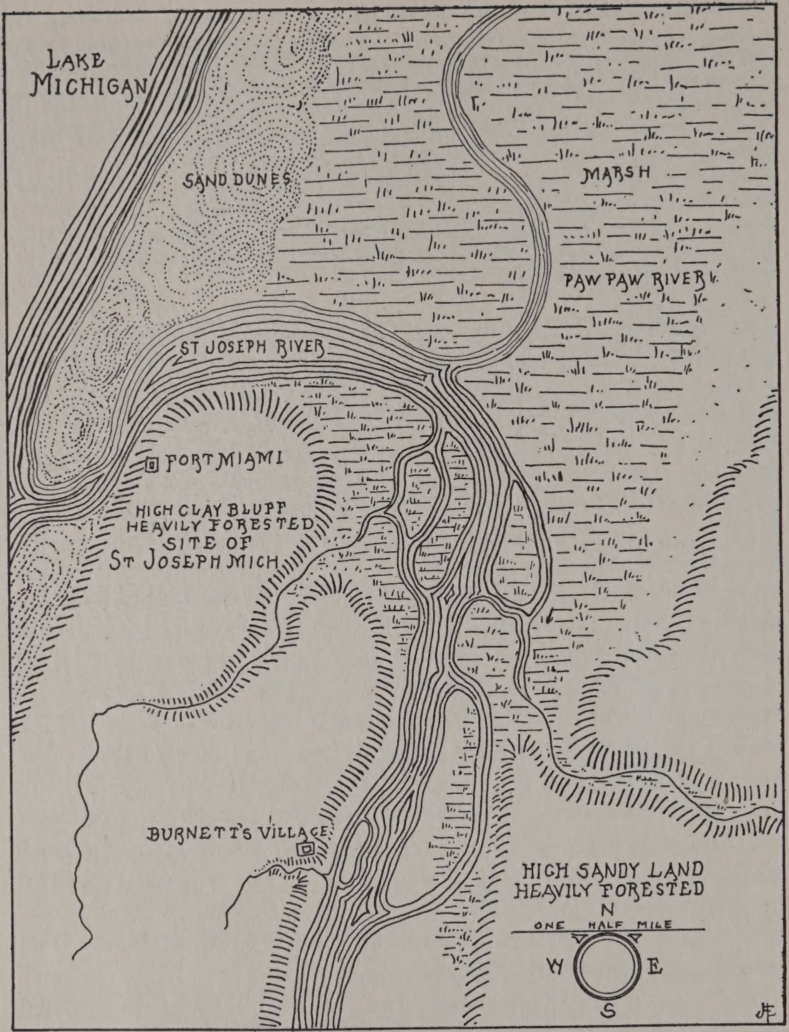
The marker pictured on the preceding page is somewhat misleading, as it states that when the GRIFFIN *did not arrive LaSalle made his way on foot to Canada. His trip on foot from Fort Miami to Canada was not made until the spring of* 1680, *after he had spent the previous winter in Illinois.*

It is erected at the west end of Ship St. where it intersects Lake Boulevard in St. Joseph and was probably placed there because of the prominence of that location. The stone monument further south on Lake Boulevard is presumed to be the site once occupied by Fort Miami, probably because of the cemetery having been found there. Others claim that Fort Miami was located where the Hotel Whitcomb now stands. No one can be sure of its exact location.

In order to carry on the fur trade, he constructed the first ship on the Great Lakes and named it the *Griffin.* It was a vessel of about forty-five tons burden and was built on the east bank, or American side, of the Niagara River above the falls, just west of the mouth of Cayuga Creek in the section of Niagara Falls which was named after LaSalle. This vessel was described by Hennepin as a bark with double decks and with a huge figure on her prow, skillfully carved in imitation of an heraldic monster with the arms of Frontenac and with an eagle above it. LaSalle did not personally supervise the building of the *Griffin.* His main helper was Henry Tonty who was often referred to as "the man with the iron hand" because of the fact that he had an artificial right hand. The Indians feared his "iron arm" because when they aroused his enmity he often hit them on their heads with his artificial hand. So while LaSalle was busy elsewhere, Tonty supervised the construction of the *Griffin,* but when it was completed he was unable to get the boat through the rapids at the outlet of Lake Erie. When LaSalle returned and was told that his men had failed to get her into the lake he made them unload the *Griffin* and, finally, with the aid of a strong wind and several of his men tugging at a tow line, succeeded in entering the lake.

In August of 1679 the anchor of the *Griffin* was raised and she proceeded to Green Bay, Wisconsin. After loading the vessel with a cargo of furs, LaSalle ordered the captain to proceed to Niagara, from which place the furs were to be transported to Montreal. The crew was then to sail the *Griffin* to the mouth of the St. Joseph River with all possible speed.[1]

After the departure of the *Griffin,* LaSalle with three friars, ten Frenchmen and a Mohican hunter, left in four large canoes for the mouth of the St. Joseph River. They proceeded down


LAKE MICHIGAN
SAND DUNES
MARSH
PAW PAW RIVER
ST JOSEPH RIVER
FORT MIAMI
HIGH CLAY BLUFF HEAVILY FORESTED SITE OF ST JOSEPH MICH
BURNETT'S VILLAGE
HIGH SANDY LAND HEAVILY FORESTED
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Site of St. Joseph and vicinity 1781, sketched by Joseph H. Emerson.

Map of mouth of St. Joseph River in 1781, *showing location of Fort Miami and Burnett's Trading Post.* (*Courtesy of the Mich. Historical Commission*)

the westerly side of Lake Michigan amid storms and privations and around the lower end of the lake to the present site of Chicago, and finally arrived on the first day of November, 1679, at the mouth of the St. Joseph River, then known as the River of the Miamis.

For a short space it might be well to let the story be told in the words of Hennepin, LaSalle's historian:

> The next Day, November 1, we embark'd on the Lake of the Illinois, and came to the Mouth of the River of the Miami's, which runs from the South, and falls into the Lake. We had appointed that place for our Rendezvous, and expected to meet there the twenty Men we had left at Missilimakinak; who being order'd to come along the other Coast of the Lake, had a much shorter cut than we, and besides their Canou's were not so much loaded as ours. However, we found no body there, nor any Mark whereby it could appear that they had been in that Place. We resolv'd to tell M. la Salle, that it was not fit to tarry any longer for them, nor expose our selves to the Hardship of the Winter; and that it would be then very difficult to meet with the Illinois, because they divided themselves into Tribes or Families, to subsist more conveniently; that if we were forc'd to remain there during the Winter, and that the Game should come to fail us, all his Men would certainly perish with Hunger; whereas we might expect to find some Indian Corn amongst the Illinois, who would rather supply with Provisions fourteen Men than two and thirty. We told him likewise, that it would be in a manner impossible to continue our Voyage till the Winter was over, if he tarry'd any longer, because the Rivers would be frozen all over, and therefore we could not make use of our Canou's. Notwithstanding these Reasons, M. la Salle told us, that it was necessary to expect the rest of his Men, because we should be then in a Condition to discover our selves to the Illinois, and make an Alliance with them; whereas we should be expos'd to their Mercy and Scorn, if we offer'd to enter their Country with so few Men; but that in the mean time he would endeavour to meet with some of that Nation, and gain them by Presents to learn their Language; concluding, that although all his Men should run away, he would remain alone with our Savage, and find means to maintain the Three Missionaries, meaning I and my two Brethren.
>
> Having therefore call'd his Men together, he told them, That he was resolv'd to expect the rest of their Companions;

and propos'd to build a Fort in that Place for securing our Ship; for we did not know then that it had perish'd; as also to secure our Goods and our selves too, in case of any Disgrace. Our Men seem'd very much dissatisfied; but he us'd so many Reasons, that they told him at last, they would entirely follow his Direction.

Just at the Mouth of the River, there was an Eminence, with a kind of a Platform naturally fortify'd: It was pretty high and steep, of a Triangular Form, defended on two sides by the River, and on the other by a deep Ditch, which the Fall of Waters had made. We fell'd the Trees that were on the top of that Hill, and having clear'd the same from Bushes for about two Musket-shot, we began to build a Redoubt of forty Foot long, and eighty broad, with great square pieces of Timber laid one upon the other; and prepar'd a great Number of Stakes of about twenty five Foot long, to drive into the Ground, to make our Fort the more unaccessible on the River side. We imploy'd the whole Month of November about that Work, which was very hard, though we had no other Food but the Bears-flesh our Savage kill'd. Those Beasts are very common in that place, because of the great quantity of Grapes they find there; but their Flesh being too fat and lushious, our Men began to be weary of it, and desir'd leave to go a hunting, to kill some wild Goats. M. la Salle deny'd them that Liberty, which caus'd some Murmurs amongst them; and it was but unwillingly that they continu'd their Work. This together with the approach of the Winter, and the apprehension M. la Salle had that his Ship was lost, made him very melancholy, though he conceal'd it as much as he could. We had made a Cabin, wherein we perform'd Divine Service every Sunday, and Father Gabriel and I, who preach'd alternatively, took care to take such Texts as were suitable to our present Circumstances, and fit to inspire us with Courage, Concord, and brotherly Love. Our Exhortations produc'd a very good Effect, and hindred our Men from deserting, as they design'd.

We sounded in the mean time, the Mouth of the River, and having found a Sand on which our Ship might strike, we fix'd two great posts therein, to which we fastened Bear-Skins as so many Buoys to direct the Course of our Ship

> through the Channel she ought to pass; and for a greater Precaution, two Men were sent back to Missilimakinak, to wait there till the return of our Ship, and serve as Pilots. The 20th of November M. Tonti arriv'd with two Canou's laden with Stags and Deers, which was a welcome Refreshment to our Men, but he did not bring above half of our Men with him, the rest being left on the other side of the Lake, within three Days Journey from our Fort. M. la Salle was very angry with him upon that Account, being afraid that they would run away.
>
> They told us that our Ship had not put into the Bay of Missilimakinak, as they were order'd, and that they had heard nothing of her since we sail'd, notwithstanding they had enquir'd as much as they could, from the Savages inhabiting the Coast of the Lake. This confirm's the Suspicion, or rather the Belief we had that she was cast away. However, M. la Salle continu'd the Building of his Fort, which was at last perfected, and call'd Fort Miamis.
>
> The Winter drawing so nigh, and M. la Salle being afraid that the Ice would stop his Voyage, sent back M. Tonti to fetch the Men he had left, and command them to come to him immediately; but meeting with a violent Storm, their Canou was driven against the Coast, and broke in pieces, whereby they lost their Guns and Equipage, and were oblig'd to return over-land. Few Days after, all our Men arriv'd except two, who deserted; so that we prepar'd our selves to continue our Voyage, the Rains that fell about that time having melted the Ice, and made the Rivers navigable.
>
> We embark'd on the Third of December, being Three and thirty Men in Eight Canou's and having left the Lake of the Illinois, went up the River Miamis, which we had sounded before.[2]

This was the first fort constructed in southern Michigan.

The next question that arises is the location of the deep ditch or ravine, as some translations describe it. The fort was protected on the west and north by the river. The St. Joseph River at the time of LaSalle's visit flowed southerly at the foot of the bluff, south of its present course, to the present location of the railroad station, and then continued in a southwesterly direction and emptied into Lake Michigan.[3] The deep ditch then must have been to the east or south. The present topography of the land gives no indication of such deep ditch or ravine. The land was cleared of bushes for a distance of about two musket shots. The smoothbore musket used at that time had an effective range of seventy-five to one hundred yards,* so two musket shots at the most would be about six hundred feet, or slightly over one-eighth of a mile. The ravine to the east of the fort near the Theisen-Clemens office building is about one-half mile from the bluff. It is doubtful if this was the ravine mentioned by Hennepin. If so, it must have kept the party of LaSalle and thirteen others, three of whom were priests and one an Indian hunter, very busy to build a fort forty by eighty feet with stockade, and still clear brush away for one-eighth of a mile, all in thirty-three days, even with the help of the men who came with Tonty, who were at the fort only a few days.

To make it more confusing for both the writer and the reader, it should be stated that there were four other Fort Miamis, one in Missouri, one at Fort Wayne, Indiana, one on the Maumee River near Toledo, Ohio, and another on the Illinois River, and there were three Miami rivers.[4] There is some indication that there was also a French fort named Fort Miamis at the mouth of the River Chicagoe, although Quaife states there is no satisfactory evidence that the French ever had a fort at Chicago. This fort, however, is mentioned in Greenville Treaty.[5]

The men became restless and LaSalle dared not wait longer for the arrival of the *Griffin* lest the river freeze over and his party would not be able to travel by canoe, so on the third day of December, 1679, his party paddled upstream towards the portage between the St. Joseph River and the Kankakee River, just north of South Bend, Indiana. As they neared that place, their Mohican Indian hunter, White Beaver, went on shore to provide game for the party and the other members of the party failed to discover the portage trail and passed it without detecting it. LaSalle then went on shore to find the hunter. He also became lost in a blinding snowstorm, but on the following day he was found by the guide and the party was led back to the portage over which they carried their canoes and then floated down the Kankakee to the Illinois River.

*According to the American Rifle Association

On March 2, 1680, LaSalle decided to return to Canada by way of Fort Miami which his party reached on the evening of March 24th. Here LaSalle found two men whom he had sent to Michilimackinac to learn what had become of the *Griffin.* They reported that they had made a circuit of the lake but had not been able to learn anything about her fate.

On the 25th a raft was finished and they crossed the river and started on their perilous journey to Montreal. In two and a half days their clothing was all torn and their faces covered by blood from the cuts of thorns and brambles. They were forced to wade through half-frozen marshes, sometimes to their waists in water, mud and bulrushes.

At that time lower Michigan was a sort of no man's land and five or six Indian tribes, being afraid of each other, did not frequent that area except to make war on each other and acquire a few scalps. One such tribe discovered LaSalle's trail and pursued his party. The Indians were eluded until it became necessary for LaSalle's party to build a fire in order to thaw out their clothes which were drenched when they removed them at night, and were frozen so stiff by morning that they could not put them on without thawing. This fire betrayed them to their pursuers who were about to attack when they discovered that LaSalle's party was French and not Indian enemies.

All of LaSalle's men became ill except one. A canoe was constructed and they paddled their way along Lake Erie to Niagara where LaSalle was told for the first time of the loss of the *Griffin.*

His companions were sick and worn out, but the intrepid and courageous LaSalle took three fresh men and proceeded to Montreal.

This hazardous journey consumed sixty-five days of the utmost hardship. On the pavements of today it might take two days of driving; by air it would be a matter of a few hours.

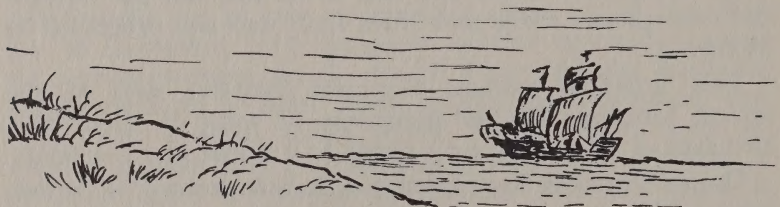
On his arrival at Fort Frontenac, LaSalle learned of further losses of his property and that most of his men had deserted, but he was not dismayed and by the tenth of August he had again collected fresh supplies of stores and ammunition, and with a company of twenty-five men, comprising a surgeon, ship carpenters, other mechanics, laborers, soldiers and voyagers, set out to return to the mouth of the St. Joseph River, which they reached on November 4. Upon arrival he found that

Fort Miami had been burned by some of his own men who had deserted.

LaSalle left five men at the ruined fort in charge of stores and he and his party proceeded to Fort Crevecouer (Broken Heart) Illinois, but he found that fort had also been destroyed, and on January 6, 1681 his party departed on foot through the deep snow for St. Joseph where he learned that in his absence the men he had left there had rebuilt the fort and cleared a considerable area of ground for planting in the following spring. They had also constructed a saw pit and had already sawed out the timber and planking for a new vessel. This was the first project for the building of vessels ever commenced on the St. Joseph River and probably the first attempt of its kind made on any point on Lake Michigan.[6]

After this time, LaSalle in his journeys to and from Illinois made temporary stops at Fort Miami. His journey down the Mississippi to the Gulf of Mexico and the discovery of the Ohio River opened the great West for less intrepid explorers.

LaSalle was a relentless taskmaster. No hardship was too great for him to endure and he expected his men to endure their trials as he did, without complaint. This uncompromising attitude caused intense hatred on the part of his men. Desertions often occurred and that hatred almost caused his death when his party was crossing the St. Joseph-Kankakee portage the first time. One of his men who walked behind raised his gun to shoot him but was prevented by one of his companions. He was finally murdered by his own men in the vicinity of the Trinity River in what later became Texas.



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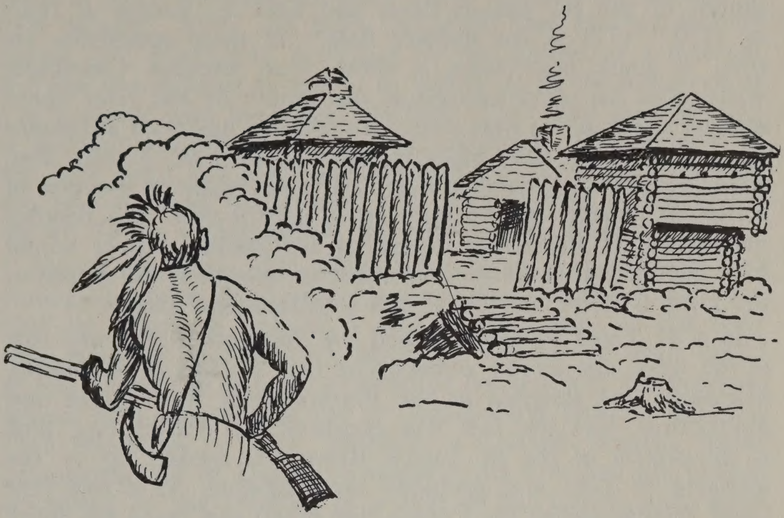
CHAPTER THREE

Fort, Mission and Trading Post at the Mouth of the St. Joseph River

There is an exasperating dearth of material regarding the fort, trading post and mission at the mouth of the St. Joseph River after Fort Miami was destroyed and abandoned sometime after LaSalle and his party occupied it in the winter of 1681. Over the years, however, much confusion has resulted because writers have not always clearly distinguished between the fort at the mouth of the St. Joseph, built by LaSalle in 1679, and the later Fort St. Joseph at Niles. This is mentioned in greater detail in Chapter V.

When St. Joseph was first settled (about 1829-1830), it was discovered that there was an Indian burying ground on the brow of the bluff overlooking the mouth of the river. This discovery was the result of the bank breaking away. Many kettles, hatchets and human bones were exposed and later, when the street was graded, many skeletons were unearthed.[1]

A band of eastern Indians built their bark wigwams near the mouth of the St. Joseph River in the fall of 1680 and



passed the following winter there. Undoubtedly they desired the protection of the French garrison.[2]

Cowles writes that soon after LaSalle departed from Fort Miami in December of 1679 a trading post and a mission were established at the mouth of the St. Joseph River.[3]

Ellis declares that the Jesuit mission, which had been organized for the Miamis (probably in the early 1700s), was continued without break for the conversion of the Potawatomies after the departure of the Miamis and that a military post had also been founded, and that another mission was afterwards established nearly fifty miles upstream (near Fort St. Joseph at Niles).[4]

Winslow asserts that about the year 1700, twenty-one years after LaSalle built Fort Miami, the Jesuits opened a mission at the mouth of the St. Joseph River and a small fort was built for protection against the savages. The forest was cleared away a distance of a musket shot, the more readily to detect any savages who might be lurking about and give the men a better opportunity to defend themselves in case of an attack. A writer, who signs as "HCS," states that after LaSalle built his fort it was used by the Jesuits as a mission and by the French as a garrison.[5] But another account states no military post was established here before August, 1706.[6]

Two writers state that Charlevoix visited the fort at the mouth of the St. Joseph River and Fort St. Joseph at Niles in 1720.[7] 1721 is the correct date.[8] If these statements are true, it must have been a short visit, because Charlevoix writes that his party arrived at the mouth of the river about midnight and in the next two days paddled upstream a distance of approximately sixty miles by river to Fort St. Joseph. But, more important, as stated above, Charlevoix made no mention of a fort or mission and no mention of such a visit. His detailed description of the minor events of his journey surely would have included some mention of a fort or mission at the mouth of the river if there had been such establishments there.

In 1762, Chief Pontiac planned the destruction of every fort in the west, and several writers state that the fort at St. Joseph, Michigan, was assigned to the Potawatomies for capture and destruction; that the fort was captured and the trading post at the mouth of the St. Joseph River was broken up by the massacre of 1763 and probably not reopened. It is said that Chief Pontiac pulled the French flag down and razed the fort.[9] This is doubtful, as Pontiac had his hands full at the Detroit siege. Above all, it is also doubtful that there was a fort at St. Joseph, Michigan, in 1763. In a summary of the English posts on the upper Great Lakes in 1762, no mention is made of a fort at St. Joseph.[10]

Quaife, an experienced historian, describing the results of Pontiac's uprising, states that the posts at Mackinac, Sandusky, Miamis, St. Joseph, Ouiatanon, Presque Isle and Venango were captured.[11] Fort St. Joseph was at Niles, Michigan. Again, there is no mention of a fort *at* St. Joseph. The Fort Miamis mentioned was at Fort Wayne, Indiana.

It is significant that Peckham,[12] another noted author, writing of the capture of forts by Pontiac's forces, mentions four forts, including Fort Miamis at Fort Wayne, Indiana, but makes no mention of the capture of the Fort Miami constructed by LaSalle at the mouth of the St. Joseph River in Michigan, which had been abandoned long before 1763. The capture of Fort Miamis (or Miami) on the St. Joseph River at Fort Wayne has been confused by many writers with the capture of Fort Miami which had previously been located at the mouth of the St. Joseph River in Michigan.[13]

It is an interesting story. Ensign Robert Holmes was in command of the Indiana fort and had been warned of the hostility of Pontiac's forces. The Indians knew that the strategy used to gain entrance to other forts would not succeed at Fort Miamis. They did learn, however, that Holmes had an Indian girl, generously described by the genteel as a mistress, and she was induced to appeal to him to go to the assistance of a sick squaw who lived near the fort. Two men were waiting in ambush and shot him when he appeared. The sergeant in the fort heard the shots and went out to investigate and he, too, was seized by the Indians. The garrison then surrendered.[14] Moral: Never underestimate the power of a woman!

About the year 1800 the United States Government sent commissioners to St. Joseph to negotiate with the Indians for land on which to establish a fort at the mouth of the river (the lands of southwestern Michigan not having been ceded at that time), but the red proprietors refused, and the commissioners then selected the site at Chicago and located and built Fort Dearborn in 1804. Hurlbut, a Chicago booster, spoke contemptuously of Damon Winslow's idea that had the Indians consented to the erection of a fort at St. Joseph, that town would have been the "Chicago" of southern Michigan. Hurlbut slightingly referred to the fort at St. Joseph as "a small wooden tomahawk fortress."[15] One can speculate as to what the results would have been had the fort been erected at St. Joseph instead of Chicago.

Van Horne, one of the captured survivors of the Fort Dearborn massacre, whose party stopped overnight at the mouth of the St. Joseph, wrote that the only fort on Lake Michigan in 1812 was the one at Chicago.[16] There is little question that Quaife's statement that LaSalle's fort was abandoned shortly after 1681 is correct. It is also probably true that a trading post and a mission were later established at the mouth of the river.

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10. *Wisconsin Historical Collections,* XVIII, 249.

11. Quaife (4), 80.

12. Peckham (1), 160.

13. Malchelosse.

14. "Boquet Papers," *Michigan Pioneer Collections,* XIX, 217.

15. Weissert, 160; see also Hurlbut, 365.

16. Van Horne, 4.

CHAPTER FOUR

Catholic Mission at Niles

The early history of the mission at Niles is not perfectly known. This is partly due to the fact that the series of the *Jesuit Relations* was discontinued in 1672.[1]

About 1680 the Potawatomie began to return to the St. Joseph Valley, from which they had previously been driven by the Iroquois, and no doubt the missionaries followed.[2]

The name of the first missionary, however, and the date of his arrival in the valley of St. Joseph is a matter of conjecture, although it is quite well established that the mission on the St. Joseph River near Niles was the first one in the lower peninsula, antedating the one at Detroit which was established in 1701.[3]

Two writers have this to say about the location of the early Catholic Mission near Niles:

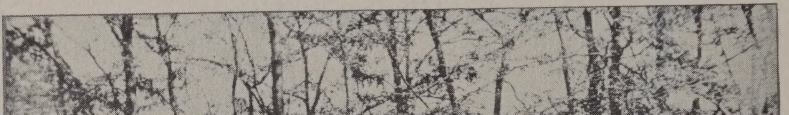
> About half a mile upstream from the heart of the town [Niles] a narrow belt of boggy lowland lying between it and the river arises a semi-circular bluff, at the base of

which, and through the soil of the marshy level, runs a brook which empties its slender contribution of supply into the St. Joseph.

On this bluff, up to twenty-five years since, if not now, the traces were plainly distinguishable of a fortification, the cross planted at the time of its construction, and still to be seen, in the rear of it, indicating by whom, and for what it was built.

Here conveniently established between an encampment of Miamis on one side of the river, and three several settlements – one at Pokagon, a second on the shores of what are now known as the Notre Dame Lakes, and the third, and principal one, close by the fort of the Pottawattomies on the other, Alouez built a chapel (a brewery occupies the site now) and nearby a log cabin for his own accommodation.[4]

Old wooden cross that marks the grave of Fr. Claude Allouez. Photo taken by L. A. Walker, October 15, 1905. (*Courtesy Cecilia B. Buechner*)



When this is first read it might be interpreted as stating the mission was on the west side of the river by the fort, but a careful perusal of all three paragraphs indicates that the mission was on the east side where the semi-circular bluff, brook and cross were located and where the brewery was later constructed.

Most writers now agree that the site of the mission at the time of the arrival of the white man was where the cross for Father Allouez now stands. McAvoy places the date as 1685.*[5]

Father Jean Claude Allouez has been given the credit of establishing the first mission near Fort St. Joseph on the east bank of the St. Joseph River. Father Allouez had worked among the Indians for a number of years and was well known to the Potawatomies in northern Wisconsin. As they gradually came back to the St. Joseph River Valley, it is said that Father Allouez accompanied them. There is no direct evidence that he was the founder of this mission.[6]

It is stated that he worked among the Indians until he died "on the Ottawa Mission" in August of 1689 at the age of seventy-six years.

Lawson writes:

> Allouez remained to minister to the spiritual welfare of the Indians of eastern Wisconsin for upwards of thirty-five years and lies buried in DePere (Wisc.), within the center of the area of his noble work.[7]

Father Allouez established the Mission of Francoix Xavier at Rapid des Pères in 1669.[8]

The Potawatomie Indians claimed he was buried on the bluff overlooking the fort and the St. Joseph River, and this claim is supported by the positive statement of Charlevoix, Nevin and Babbitt.[9] The claim of the burial at Niles is accepted and recorded by the Jesuits and by Schauinger.[10] A rude wooden cross was erected upon his grave. Years later, when it had fallen into a state of decay, it was replaced by one of granite. The inscription on it, erected by the Woman's Progressive League of Niles, Mich., 1918, reads as follows:

> To the memory of Father Claude Jean Allouez, S. J., whose intrepid courage won the admiration of the Indians,

*McMurdy states that the mission was started as early as 1675 and later moved to a site where Johnson's brewery was later located.

> and whose apostolic zeal earned for him the title of the Francis Xavier of the American Missions. Father Allouez was born at St. Didier, France, in 1622 and died near this spot August 27, 1689.

Henepin, LaSalle's historian, described the journey upstream from the mouth of the St. Joseph River to the portage north of South Bend made in 1679, but significantly made no mention of a mission or post either at Bertrand, or what later became the site of Fort St. Joseph at Niles.

One of the first authentic references to the mission at Niles is found in a grant to Father Dablon dated May 24, 1689, of a parcel of land with a frontage on the River St. Joseph of twenty arpents (3850 feet) by twenty arpents in depth "at a place most suitable for the erection of a chapel and residence." It refers to the establishment of the Society of Jesus in the same region on October 1, 1686, showing that the idea of establishing a mission there had been considered as early as that date. This grant was made by the government in Quebec and confirmed by the King of France. The location was about twenty leagues, or about sixty miles, from the mouth of the river.[11]

In an unsigned manuscript in the archives of Notre Dame University at South Bend, Indiana, referred to herein, is this statement:

> At Niles there are some Catholics, Canadians and Irish for the most part, at one mile from Niles there is a cross placed at the side of the road near the station of the Jesuit fathers.

While the missions may have been moved from place to place,[12] it stands to reason that no one would establish a site very far from the fort where there would be no protection afforded by the soldiers, and the same reasoning applies to the post occupied by the traders. At one time, at least, it is known that the Miami Mission was connected to the fort. About 1699 a band of Potawatomies established a village across the river from the Miami Village. Lanman states that a chapel was erected by the side of the fort,[13] so it may safely be assumed that the location of the fort, as described in another chapter, and that of the Miami Mission were not far apart.

In 1690 Father Claude Aveneau was sent to this mission and served alone until a helper in the person of Father Jean Mermet was sent about 1699. Mermet served until the summer of 1702 when he was sent to a post near the present city of Cairo, Illinois. Father Aveneau died at Quebec, September 14, 1711. Father Mermet's successor was Father Jean Baptiste Chardon, who arrived in 1705 and remained until 1712. Shortly after his arrival, Father Chardon established a mission for the Potawatomie Indians across the river from the post and the Miami village.

By 1712, conditions were in such a turmoil that Chardon left for Mackinac and the mission was left without a resident missionary for seven or eight years. Father Chardon returned for a brief period in 1729.

Fortunately for students of history, Rev. George Paré made a copy of the St. Joseph Baptismal Register from the original preserved in the library of the Seminary at Quebec. At least four or five pages were missing at the beginning of the register, and the first entry was dated August 15, 1720 and made by a Father Michel Guignas, who probably had been serving at this mission for two years before that date. In 1721 Father Guignas was succeeded by Father Jean Baptiste de Saint-Pe who made one entry in the baptismal records in October, 1721, and another in 1734.

In 1722, Jean Charles Buymonneau was the resident missionary and made his last entry on May 2, 1723. He was followed by Charles Michel Mesaiger, who served until 1731. The records indicate that there was no priest at the mission from the spring of 1731 until 1734 when Father de Saint-Pe performed two baptisms. Then came Jean Louis de la Pierre, who left after September 11, 1735. Three years later the record is signed by Pierre Du Jaunay who made entries until April 22, 1752.

For the space of twenty years Jean-Baptiste de la Morinie alternated with Father Du Jaunay until 1760. The last entry before ouster of the Jesuits was made by Father Pierre Potier on June 12, 1761. The following year the French government decreed the secularization of the Jesuits at home and in its colonies and the Jesuits were deported in 1764 to be replaced by Recollets. For a short period Father Gibault, in the summer of 1768, recorded some baptisms and again in March of 1773, when the final entry was made in the register.[14]

Between 1740 and 1750 there were about fifty-five families living in or near the post. In 1780 there were eight families of forty-nine persons.[15]

This mission, the trading post and Fort St. Joseph combined, made one of the most important trading places between Chicago and Detroit, as it was located near the great Sauk and other important trails, one of which led from Canada to New Orleans. In 1762 the post on the St. Joseph River was paying an annual rental of 3000 livres, or about $600.00 to Michilimackinac.[16]

The history of this mission, the trading post and the fort is so intermingled that it is difficult to draw a clear picture of any one of them.

After 1773 the visits of the priests were intermittent. At that time there were not enough priests to care for the smaller settlements and those who did attend were forced to travel great distances through the wilderness and endure great hardship. Very little information can be found regarding this mission from 1773 to 1825. For many years after 1750, when there was no regular priest assigned to this mission, the Indians of the Catholic faith often traveled to Quebec, Detroit, Kaskaskia and Vincennes to attend religious services.

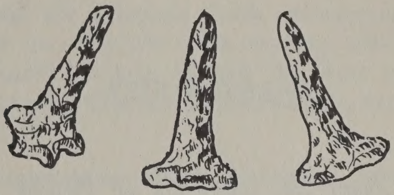
Because of the constant plea of the Indians for a priest to be stationed permanently at the St. Joseph Mission, Father Rese was sent in 1830 and he probably served at Pokagon's Village and Bertrand. He remained only a short time and was replaced by Father Badin.

The mission was probably completely abandoned about 1830 when it appears that most of the Catholic activity was centered in Pokagon's Village and Bertrand. This abandonment was brought about by several different circumstances. One remote cause was the early expulsion of the Jesuits; others were the persistent furnishing of liquor to the Indians by the traders, the establishment by the Baptists of Carey Mission, the gradual increase of white settlers and the disposition of the government to force the Indians to move further westward. The introduction of spirits broke up tribal control and brought about disrespect for the mission and encouraged unfair trading on the part of the traders to procure furs from the Indians.

The reader may learn of the hardships of the courageous priests and missionaries from the following description of the cabin of one priest:

> The chimney in my cabin smokes so much that it sometimes extinguishes the fire; then the floor is so badly joined, also the door, that we have wind passing in abundantly. The roof is half open in many places and today is covered with a foot of snow which protects us against the cold,

> but in time of rain or thaw we submit to a strong dribbing, and sometimes to showers.
>
> My bed was a mat and a few covers; in September I finally obtained a straw bed, still I enjoyed it not two nights. To practice hospitality I gave it to a friend who has passed many months in the village.
>
> My table is a bench four feet long and ten thumbs high. It is little, but sufficient for two persons who have but one dish to put there. Sometimes we are without food when the hunting has not been good, then we have recourse to the mush or beans; it is the same when we need bread, but always in one way or another we live by the Grace of God. *I enjoy myself very much.* I never looked better and I have not been more content.[17]



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1. Paré, 78.
2. Paré, 79.
3. Paré, 78; see also Roberts, 427.
4. Nevin, 50-51; see also *History of the University of Notre Dame from* 1842 *to* 1892, 31.
5. McAvoy, 8.
6. Paré, 81.
7. Lawson, 46.
8. Lawson, 46.
9. Paré, 84; see also Nevin, 51; Babbit, 573-577.
10. J. Schauinger, 216; see also *Liste des Missionnaires-Jesuites, Nouvelle-France et Louisiane,* 1611-1800.
11. Paré, 79.
12. Weissert, 59.
13. Lanman, 61.
14. Paré, 93-99; see also *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review,* XIII (No. 2, Sept. 1926), 239.
15. *Michigan Pioneer Collections,* XIII, 58-59; see also Ballard (3), 20; Paré, 100.
16. *Michigan Pioneer Collections,* XIX, 21.
17. Buechner, 26.

CHAPTER FIVE

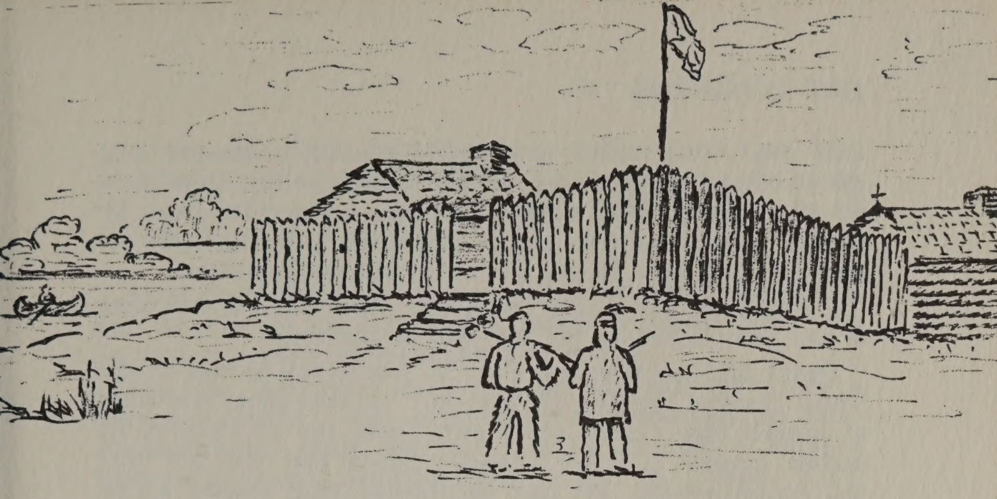
Fort St. Joseph at Niles

Shortly after October, 1691, a military post was established about one mile south of the present City of Niles on the west bank of the St. Joseph River and became the most important station in southwestern Michigan.

As previously noted, much confusion has resulted from the fact that the early writers often mentioned Fort St. Joseph, Fort *at* St. Joseph and Fort *on* the St. Joseph without stating the exact location of the fort to which they were referring. As a result, students of local history must exercise great care to determine whether or not the fort mentioned was Fort Miami (at the mouth of the River) or Fort St. Joseph (just south of Niles).

Then, too, there was a Fort St. Joseph on the St. Mary's River below Sault Ste. Marie and a fort of the same name on the St. Clair River and one St. Joseph River of the Maumee in Ohio.

On October, 1691, Frontenac (Governor of New France) ordered Courtemanche to build a military post on the St. Joseph



River to prevent the Iroquois from corrupting the loyalty of the Miami, and the English from trading with them.[1]

All of the early writers placed the fort on the east side of the river, ignoring Charlevoix's statement, made in 1721 when he visited the fort:

> The Poutewatamies have occupied successively several posts here where they still are; their village is on the same side with the fort, a little below it and on a very fine spot of ground: that of the Miamis is on the other side of the river.[2]

It is generally agreed that the Miamis were located on the east side and the Potawatomies were on the west side. This definitely places the early fort on the west side of the river, at least until 1721.

Collidge follows Charlevoix and unhesitatingly states that the fort was, in 1721, on the west side of the river.[3] There can be no doubt that the fort was moved to the east side of the river sometime between 1721 and the arrival of the white settlers. In Louis C. Karpinski's bibliography of the printed maps of Michigan,[4] the fort is shown sometimes on one side of the river and then on the other. Perhaps too much dependence cannot be placed on the early maps, often drawn by one who had never visited the area covered by the map, but who relied solely upon statements of travelers.

Much has been written about the exact location of the site of the fort and the missions after the fort was moved to the east side of the river. Most descriptions are indefinite and of little value. One writer, in a facetious mood, comments upon the fact that historians have blithely moved the fort from place to place, and then he followed in their written footsteps by placing the site one mile west of Niles, nearly on the same site occupied by Carey Mission.[5] This is without foundation.

Hereafter in this chapter, reference is made to the fort after it had been moved to the east side of the river.

Daniel McCoy states that Fort St. Joseph was located in the Third Ward of the City of Niles and "covered about two acres of ground then (1907) under cultivation, and no trace of its outline remains."[6] Judge Coolidge writes that the first fort had no earthworks, but later earthworks were erected a few rods north and west of the boulder.[7]

L. H. Beeson, a student of local history, writes:

> The site of the Village, Mission and Fort of St. Joseph was on the eastern side of the river, on the first terrace up from the river, in the southwest quarter of the southwest quarter of Section 35, Niles Township, Berrien County, the center of Occupancy being somewhat south of the point where the north line of said southwest quarter of southwest quarter of Section 35 touches the east side of the river. The dam of the Niles Water Power Co. across the river having raised the water about ten or twelve feet has brought the water nearly up to the top of the terrace upon which was situated the old mission.

This article also describes the site of the fort and mission as "one mile nearly south of the intersection of Main and Front Streets in the City of Niles."[8]

In 1762 Thomas Hutchins, an engineer, was appointed an Ensign in the British Army and made a trip of inspection around the Great Lakes. In his journal he stated:

> Fort St. Joseph stands within a few yards of navigable water commanded by two high banks, one on each side of the river, and from its elevation appears to have been intended more as a place for traders to put their effects in than a work of defense to keep the natives at their proper distance. It is inhabited by about a dozen French families who chiefly support themselves by the trade they carry on with the Indians and notwithstanding the country is

> very rich about them, they raise nothing more than some Indian corn and make a little hay to support their horses and mules and a few milch cows, which seems to be all the stock they have.[9]

These descriptions are the most definite of any of the writers and the first to use known monuments or points which can be used as a place of beginning in a survey.

The first fort was a mere stockade equipped with only a few small cannon. Later earthworks were erected on the bluff. Another writer states that in the spring of 1694 a band of Iroquois of several hundred attacked Fort St. Joseph. They killed several local Indians who were working in the corn fields and then swooped down on the fort. The soldiers in the fort fired a volley that discouraged the attackers and they retreated.[10]

The Iroquois tribe with headquarters in what is now the State of New York was constantly sending its war parties to this area. They were much like the Sioux in the West who were said "to sleep with one foot in the air," meaning that they were always in motion.

Fort St. Joseph, first called Fort Oola, with the trading post and missions on the river at Niles, was, until 1701, considered the most important post in Michigan except the one at Michilimackinac. The flag of France was the first to be hoisted over the fort. At first the post was small, sufficient to hold only twenty men, but was gradually enlarged and enclosed by connecting the stockade with two gates as was customary in the French forts. The buildings were low with bark and thatched roofs. The church was connected to the fort by a low picket fence so as to enclose the house for the missionary with his gardens and various outbuildings.[11]

Charlevoix, who visited the fort in 1721, wrote:

> The commandant's house, which is a very sorry one, is called the fort, from its being surrounded with an indifferent pallisado.[12]

The great Sauk trail from Detroit to Chicago, which was later known as the Chicago Road, passed through Bertrand a short distance south of Fort St. Joseph and the present City of Niles; the St. Joseph-Kankakee trail from South Bend north ran along the west side of the St. Joseph River and passed through both Bertrand and Niles; then there was a branch of the Sauk trail from the southern part of Bertrand Township connecting with the Kankakee trail south and west of Niles. The Kankakee trail led to the famous portage north of South Bend, Indiana, between the St. Joseph River and the Kankakee for travel to the Illinois River and on to the great Mississippi and contributed to the volume of traffic at Fort St. Joseph. Another trail, really another branch of the Sauk trail, ran along the west side of the St. Joseph River from Bertrand to McCoy's Mission; another main trail ran from Niles in a westerly direction to Moccasin Village and then northwesterly to St. Joseph, while the Grand River trail ran from Niles to the Grand River Mission. A lesser trail branched from the Grand River trail and crossed country to Berrien Springs. Still another trail from Montreal to New Orleans branched at Niles and ran northeasterly through Cassopolis and a parallel trail connected with the trail from Elkhart, Indiana, through Pokagon Township, Cass County. The trail from Fort Wayne connected with the old Sauk trail in Milton Township, Cass County, about four to five miles east of the St. Joseph River.

The so-called Territorial trail branched from the Sauk trail at Ypsilanti and the northern branch led westward to the mouth of the St. Joseph River. Another trail, which struck the shore of Lake Michigan at the mouth of the St. Joseph River, came from Mackinaw.

From the above, one can readily see that the area of Berrien and Cass Counties was literally criss-crossed by trails.[13]

Very little is known of the garrison at Fort St. Joseph from about 1697 to 1712, when Sieur de Vincennes returned as commandant, after which the fort remained garrisoned until captured by Chief Pontiac's forces in 1763.

When Charlevoix visited Fort St. Joseph, it was described as consisting of several buildings made of poles stuck in the ground chinked with moss and covered with bark on the sides and roofs. The roofs were weighted down by poles laid across the roof and held down with stones. There were storehouses for corn, a platform used in making lyed corn and a pit to hold the kettle for heating tallow. Charlevoix reported:

> Their villages are generally of no regular form: most of our ancient accounts have represented them of a round

> figure, and perhaps the authors of them saw none but as were so. In a word, imagine to yourself, Madam, a confused heap of cabbins placed without any order or design: some of them like cart houses, others like so many tubs, built of bark, supported by a few posts, and sometimes coarsely plastered on the outside with clay; and, in fact, built with much less art, neatness, and solidity than those of the beavers. These cabbins are from fifteen to twenty foot broad, and sometimes a hundred in length. In this case they have several fires, each fire serving for a space of thirty feet.
>
> When the floor happens not to be large enough for bedding for all the persons in the family, the young folks have their beds on a kind of loft five or six feet from the ground, and which runs the whole length of the cabbin; the household furniture and provisions are placed above that on shelfs laid crossways next the roof . . . . The doors are only so many pieces of bark, suspended from the top like the ports of a ship. These cabbins have neither chimnies nor windows, only there is left in the middle of the roof an aperture by which part of the smoke gets out, and which they are obliged to stop up, when it rains or snows, as also to put out the fire if they should not be blinded by smoke.[14]

The long house, so called, was a type of structure used by the Iroquois, but in this case it was used by the Potawatomies or Miamis. Later an entrenchment was thrown around the fort. The post consisted of the fort, the mission buildings, and buildings used by the traders. In order to keep the Potawatomies in good humor, it was necessary to give them an opportunity to trade without traveling a great distance and huge stocks of goods were maintained by the traders.

During this visit Charlevoix almost met with a serious accident while traveling from the mouth of the river to Fort St. Joseph. His party camped for the night. The weather was hot, so he decided to take a walk with his dog, but failed to tell anyone of his intentions. He threw a stick into the river and the dog noisily plunged into the river to retrieve it. The men in camp thought a deer was swimming in the river and one of them, with his loaded gun, crept towards Charlevoix. Fortunately Charlevoix heard the man approaching and asked if he was mistaking him for a bear. His alertness saved his life.[15]

Charlevoix took pride in praising the French because they diluted the liquor they sold or traded illegally to the Indians and this made it less harmful than that which the English sold.

How far can one go in seeking reasons to praise his countrymen?

According to Paré, one of the most colorful families to reside at Fort St. Joseph was that of the DeVilliers. Coulon de Villiers was commandant of Fort St. Joseph from 1725 to 1730. Seven sons and six daughters were born of this marriage. The sons saw early service with the French in Indian warfare. These members of the DeVilliers family all helped to make the history of the French colonies from Acadia to New Orleans.

While Joseph was in command of a force of French soldiers near the forks of the Ohio River, his force was attacked by an English enemy and he was killed. His brother, Louis, bent on revenge, attacked the English forces who fled to the protection of Fort Necessity, Pennsylvania, in 1754. They held out for only one day and surrendered. The boy who hunted and fished along the banks of the St. Joseph River, in what later became the City of Niles, accepted the sword of surrender from none other than George Washington, the first President of the United States.[16]

So spreads the fame of Niles!

This area's influence was extended in 1736 when the commandant of Fort St. Joseph at that time, the Sieur du Muy, made a complete collection of the flora of the St. Joseph Valley and took it with him when he returned to France.

During the period of 1740 to 1750, about fifty-five families lived at or near the fort. It is reported that on June 30, 1780, a census disclosed fifteen houses and forty-nine persons.[17]

In 1744 war broke out between the English and the French and the Potawatomies sided with the French with whom they had always been friendly. Although Fort St. Joseph had been surrendered in 1759, it continued to be occupied by the French until September, 1761, on account of unsettled conditions and because during the winters the weather was so cold that the French could not leave and the British could not take over. In 1763 the Treaty of Paris was signed, giving England all of the territory east of the Mississippi.

On September 8, 1761, Captain Balfour was ordered from Detroit to take over the post at Fort St. Joseph with a detachment of the 60th and 80th Regiments. He left part of his men at

Michilimackinac. He then garrisoned the post at Green Bay and continued on to Fort St. Joseph where he left a small party under the command of Ensign Slosser. Upon occupancy by the British, the second national flag was flown over this fort.

The British did not adopt the ways of the Indian as did the French, nor were the commandants of the British posts supplied with as many presents to curry favor with the Indians as the French officials had used for that purpose. Then, too, the coming of the white settlers who wanted the best Indian lands alarmed and aroused the haughty Pontiac. As a result he organized an uprising among the tribes in this region and the Potawatomies were assigned the task of capturing the fort at Niles. At that time the fort was garrisoned by fourteen British soldiers under the command of Ensign Slosser. On May 25, 1763, seventeen Potawatomies, under the leadership of Chief Washee, came into Slosser's room on the pretense of holding a council. A Frenchman, who had learned that treachery was planned, rushed in to give the alarm. The warning came too late, and Slosser was seized, ten of the garrison were killed and the other three, with the commandant, were made prisoners and taken to Detroit for exchange.[18] The fort was held by Pontiac forces for over one year until Pontiac made his peace with the British.

In June, 1779, Major DePeyster at Mackinac dispatched Lieutenant Bennett with a party of twenty soldiers and sixty traders and Indians to Fort St. Joseph to intercept a hostile force which was reputed to be en route from the Illinois, via Fort St. Joseph, against Detroit. Bennett encamped some weeks at Fort St. Joseph when increasing dissatisfaction and desertion on the part of his Indian allies caused him to retire in the direction of Mackinac.

One contemplated attack on Fort St. Joseph did not materialize. In a letter from Colonel George Rogers Clark to Thomas Jefferson, the governor of Virginia, under date of September 23, 1779, the colonel stated, in part:

> His Excellency Thomas Jefferson
>
> . . . . I have now a detachment of about 250 French soldiers, Indians and a few regulars on their march to attack a British Fort at St. Joseph's near Lake Michigan commanded by a Lieutenant and party where there is very considerable stores deposited for the use of employing savages. The party is commanded by Captain Shilby —

> there is no doubt of his success as their route is such that there is but little probability of the enemy being apprised of them before it is too late. His orders is to demolish the fortifications and return with the stores — I am with respect
>
> G. Clark
>
> N. B. Sergeant Chapman reports that Mr. James Shilby endeavored to raise his troops for the above expedition, the men complained that they had *no shoes* and would therefore not go to St. Joseph's.*
>
> A. S. DePeyster
> Major[19]

For the want of a nail! —

Until the end of the Revolutionary War, very little thought had been given to the western boundaries of the colonies. France had claimed territory wherever her citizens had explored and oftentimes where they had not. That is, from Quebec on the north to New Orleans on the south. Spain was claiming lands on the Gulf of Mexico and as far north as St. Louis. Both nations were constantly working to gain control of the important Mississippi Valley, for this would mean the control of the very important fur trade. Indeed, a primary motive of the French in the new world was to acquire and hold the control of that trade. They also desired to find a waterway across the new continent that would give them a short route to the Orient. Their third desire, and in their eyes the least important, was to bring Christianity to the Indians.

In December of 1780, Jean Baptiste Hamelin (one-half Indian) of Cahokia, near St. Louis, Missouri, organized a party of sixteen men with pack horses and marched to Fort St. Joseph and attacked. They arrived when the Indians were away hunting and so met with no resistance. They took the traders captive and paroled them. They carried off fifty bales of goods and set out for Chicago. A Lieutenant Dagneau de Quindre, who had been stationed near the village by the Lieutenant Governor of Detroit, immediately assembled some Indians and pursued the raiding party as far as Petit Fort, between Michigan City and South Chicago, where on December 5th his party recovered the goods, killed four, wounded two and took seven prisoners.[20]

*It would appear that Col. Clark's letter had fallen into the hands of the British and that DePeyster had added a postscript.

It would be interesting to know exactly where the lieutenant was stationed. He had been given leadership of the Potawatomies at his own request, so it may be that he was living with them. He was not at the village nor in the fort. This same De Quindre is the subject of a letter from Major de Peyster, British commander at Detroit, to General Haldimand, Governor General and Commander in Chief of North America at Quebec, dated August 31, 1780.[21] The major stated that De Quindre had just arrived from St. Joseph's with two hundred Potawatomie and one scalp taken near the falls of the Ohio and had asked for a reward for their services. The major indignantly refused to reward the impudent scoundrels, as he expressed it. Perhaps their low average of two hundred courageous warriors to only one scalp irked him and he concluded they would have to improve their scalp score before they were entitled to a reward.

Two reasons are given for the next attack on the fort, which occurred on February 12, 1781. One was that while the British were in possession of Fort St. Joseph a rumor reached the ears of the Spaniards that the fort was being equipped with military supplies so that an attack could be launched against St. Louis, then claimed and held by Spain. Another was that those who escaped at Fort Petit returned to Cahokia and planned revenge. A third reason is brought to light in a letter of January 10, 1781, now in the collection of Louisiana Papers in the Bancroft Library at the University of California. This letter was written by Franco Cruzat, then in command of the Spanish forces at St. Louis. He reports that he was approached by Chiefs El Heturno and Naquiquen to plan a raid on Fort St. Joseph and he consented, as it would have been a sign of weakness on his part if he refused their request.

In any event, a new expedition started from St. Louis under the command of Captain of Militia Pyre. This party was made up of sixty volunteers, twelve Spanish militia men and sixty Indians. One writer states that they were reinforced by two hundred Indians en route. They marched four hundred miles through the ice and snow and crossed the St. Joseph River on the ice, capturing the fort without bloodshed. They remained a matter of only a few hours (some say a few days) but raised the flag of Spain over the fort and took formal possession in the name of the King of Spain, and then destroyed the fort. The church was not destroyed and was later taken down and moved to the settlement of Bertrand. This was the third national flag to float over the fort.

There is no record that the fort was ever rebuilt after this attack[22] and it was the only fort in Michigan captured and occupied by troops under the Spanish flag.

Although peace between Great Britain and the Americans was concluded by the treaty of 1783 and by Jay's Treaty of 1794, which was ratified in 1795, it was agreed that the British should evacuate all forts and posts by 1796, and in that year the Americans were given possession and Old Glory, the fourth national flag, was hoisted over what was left of the post which had been so important in the early days.

When war was declared between England and the United States in 1812, both parties sent messengers to the Potawatomies on the St. Joseph River to secure them as allies, and the Indians agreed to fight with Tecumseh against the forces of the United States. After the defeat of Tecumseh and the British forces, peace was sued for in October of 1813.

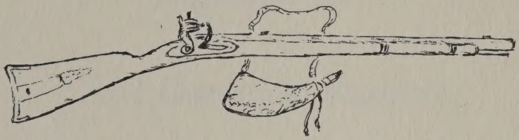
The presence of Fort St. Joseph and the Carey Mission influenced white families to settle nearby where they would have protection, and gradually Pogwatique became a settlement and was later named Niles. The name Pogwatique is shown on the books of account of traders Walling and Lacey.[23]

A traveler, in 1842, thus describes Niles as he saw it in 1831:

> Before us the beautiful St. Jo rolled in peerless grandeur between her high and towering banks. The small group of houses below was the Village of Niles. We put up at a small and comfortable inn, and after supper strolled up the river along its banks in search of those antiquated remains of the ancient race that once was supposed to have peopled the western part of this continent. We had not rambled far before we came across the remains of an old fort, the appearance of which indicated that it was near a century and a half old. Upon the higher bank on the opposite side of the river were to be seen several mounds, apparently the burial place of our red brethren. A few rods from the fort, and higher up the bank, we found one solitary mound, surmounted with a rude cross bearing no inscription . . . . The sun was just settling behind the western horizon, as we took an Indian trail and pushed for the village, reaching it in twenty minutes.[24]

So, in this short chapter, we have bridged more than two centuries, with a peek into the history of old Fort St. Joseph, established by the French, ceded to the British, captured by the Indians, recaptured by the English, seized by the Spanish, and taken over by the Americans, where the fourth flag was hoisted in all her glory. Otherwise, how could Niles ever have had a Four Flags Hotel?

With the exception of the early traders who dealt with the Indians, the firm of Walling and Lacey was the first to open a mercantile establishment in Niles. This was done in October, 1828, and Joseph Bertrand and members of his family were among their customers. This firm's account books are in the Fort St. Joseph Historical Association Museum at Niles, Michigan.



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CHAPTER SIX

Fort Dearborn Massacre

The original intention of the writer was to limit this history to the events which occurred on our very doorsteps, that is, Berrien County and closely adjoining areas. However, so many residents of this locality were involved in the horrible events which occurred at Fort Dearborn only a short distance away, that it may not be amiss to relate some of them.

Captain John Whistler built Fort Dearborn in 1803 and 1804 on the shore of Lake Michigan in what is now Chicago. When the War of 1812 unleashed the fury of the Indians, Fort Dearborn was captured on August 15th, and on that day occurred the most terrible massacre in the history of this area. The garrison had been alarmed by the attacks on settlers since April and the fort became the center of refuge. In fact, the news that war had been declared was brought to Fort Dearborn by Pierre le Claire, a half-breed Potawatomie, who, according to tradition, ran from the mouth of the St. Joseph River to Fort Dearborn, a distance of ninety miles, in a single day to warn the occupants of the fort. Distance runners take notice!

Chief Topenebee was a friend of the white man and as soon as he learned of the impending trouble, he sent word to Mr. John Kinzie, a friendly trader, that he should be on his guard because the Potawatomies intended to attack, but Kinzie disregarded the warning, thinking that he had enough influence with the Indians to restrain them.

Several of the chiefs, while they shared the general hostile feeling of their tribe towards the Americans, nevertheless retained a personal regard for their friends among the whites. The evening before the massacre, Chief Black Partridge entered the quarters of Captain Heald and delivered to him a medal which had been presented to the chief by the Americans as a token of mutual friendship. He said he could not restrain the young men of his tribe who were determined to take the lives of the whites and that he could not wear a token of peace while he was compelled to act as an enemy.

Captain Nathan Heald was the commanding officer. It is said that he had received orders to abandon Fort Dearborn and leave for Fort Wayne. He destroyed all the whiskey, ammunition and arms which he had promised to give to the Indians. John Kinzie, who then lived at Fort Dearborn and was a friend of Burnett, Bertrand and many of the head men among the Indians, advised against leaving the fort. In spite of Topenebee and Black Partridge's warning, Heald was determined to evacuate the fort. He placed some reliance upon the promise of thirty-two Miamis to escort the party to Fort Wayne. Accordingly, on the morning of August 15th, while the band played the Death March, the entire garrison, with women and children, left the fort in a desperate try for safety. The party had gone about a mile when hostile Indians were observed behind the sand dunes. The Miamis took flight, for they did not favor the attack.

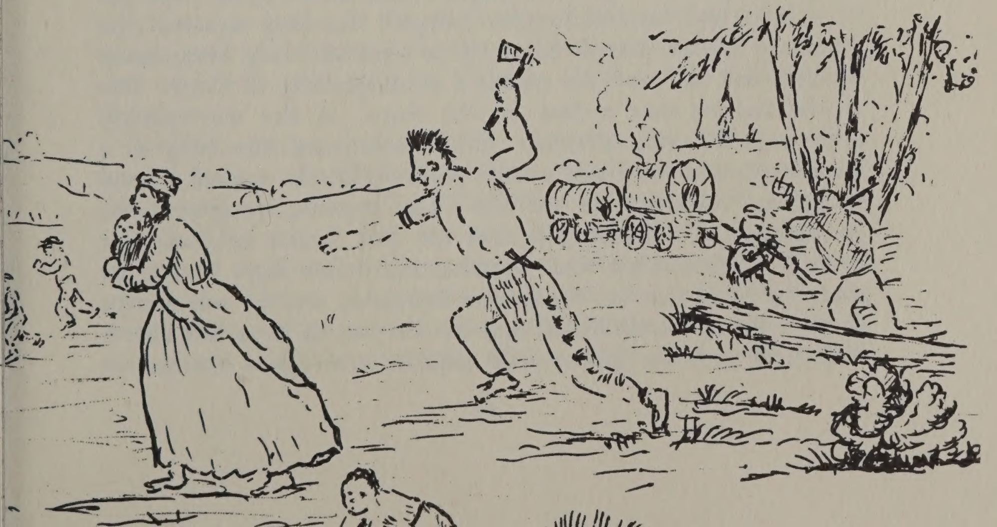
Mrs. Helm, wife of Lt. Helm, tells of how she was attacked by a warrior who struck her with his tomahawk. Suddenly she was grabbed from behind by an older Indian, who bore her, struggling and resisting, to the lake. She relates that she was plunged into the water, but she soon perceived that her captor did not desire to drown her but to hold her head above the water. Chief Black Partridge was her rescuer, and when the firing had nearly subsided he led her to the shore. One of the squaws gave her some sweetened water to revive her.

She was then led to the home of a Frenchman where, when the Indians approached to search the house, she was hidden under a large feather bed and the Frenchman's half-breed wife seated herself on the front side of the bed. The search was made but the hiding place of Mrs. Helm was not discovered.

Later, Mrs. Helm accompanied her parents (Kinzie) to St. Joseph. Lieutenant Helm was taken down the Illinois River by his captors, but was later ransomed by a half brother of John Kinzie for two horses and the promise of a keg of liquor.

One young savage climbed into the wagon that contained the white children and tomahawked all but one of the twelve children. John Chandonai, the hero of the affair at Burnett's Trading Post where he killed his uncle (see Chapter VII), was one of the men who fought the Indians on this occasion. The members of the Kinzie family, except Mr. Kinzie, took refuge in a boat near the mouth of the river. An Indian was trying to take off the bonnet of Mrs. Heald as she and Chandonai approached the boat. Chandonai, at the command of Mrs. Kinzie, traded the Indian a mule which was tied nearby, in addition to ten bottles of whiskey, for the release of Mrs. Heald, who had been seriously wounded.[1]

As the troops were about to leave the fort, it was learned that the horses that carried the surgeon's implements and medicines had broken loose. A non-commissioned officer was sent after them. While he was gone the massacre commenced. On his way back to the Fort he was captured by Chief Topenebee (one writer states Chief Pokagon assisted), who put him in



a canoe and paddled across the river and then told him to hide in the woods. His life was thus saved by the chief.

A Potawatomie chief later related that during the massacre, when Captain Wells was hard pressed and in fear of losing his life, he saw Topenebee and said to him: "Father, I want to live," and the chief replied, "My son, you can live," but he could not restrain the murderous fury of the young warriors.

Of the nearly one hundred who marched from the fort, over half of them were killed and the rest surrendered. The garrison numbered only fifty-six soldiers (accounts differ) in addition to the traders and women and children, in all ninety-three persons. The Indians had a force of six hundred eighty-four. Two women and twelve children were wantonly tomahawked and several soldiers were killed. After the surrender of the whites, the Kinzie family returned to their near-by home where Chief Black Partridge and Chief Wa-ban-see stood guard to protect them. On the third day after the battle, the Kinzie family was put on a boat and conveyed to St. Joseph where they remained until the following November under the protection of Chief Topenebee. They were then conducted to Detroit and delivered to the British Indian agent as prisoners of war.

Leopold Pokagon did not learn of the impending trouble at Fort Dearborn until the day before the massacre. He was in northern Michigan and at once, with Topenebee and Sawawk (Leopold's father-in-law), hastened to Chicago on horseback and arrived during the massacre. Captain Heald was seriously wounded and his captors threatened to kill him if he didn't die of his wounds. Leopold and Topenebee spirited him away and the day after the battle Captain and Mrs. Heald were put in a boat and headed for St. Joseph.[2] As they reached the mouth of the St. Joseph River, they were suffering from many wounds and had no food except a small quantity of flour. One of the Indians shot a deer on the shore. A fire was quickly built and the deer dressed. Mrs. Heald used the hide as a kneading board and made a thick paste which she wound around sticks and toasted over the fire. The captain, hungry as the proverbial bear, declared it was the best bread he had ever eaten.[3] They resided with Burnett, and a few days later were taken to Mackinac by Alexander Robinson, said by one writer to be a Potawatomie Chief, and by another to be a half-breed. Alexander and his Indian wife paddled the canoe for sixteen long days and received in payment the sum of $100.00 for their services and the use of the canoe. That was before inflation reached civilization!

Another survivor of the massacre was James Van Horne who was taken captive. He wrote an account of the massacre, which was first published in 1817. Fortunately, a copy of his narrative has been located and reprinted. In that article he stated that the orders of General Hull to Captain Heald were to abandon Fort Dearborn and proceed to Detroit. Others state the garrison was to proceed to Fort Wayne.

Van Horne was forced to witness the cooking and eating by the Indians of two hearts of the murdered men and another heart-rending scene of a woman with child being scalped, cut open, her unborn baby taken out, scalped and murdered. In addition to this witnessing inhuman torment, his own physical suffering was almost beyond endurance. His clothing was taken away, his beard pulled out, his hair shaved, and he was painted with a yellow clay to resemble the Indians. On the way to Detroit, the party of prisoners, of which Van Horne was one, stopped at "St. Joseph's" and remained one day to allow the sick to rest. Van Horne stated that the only fort on Lake Michigan at that time was the one at Chicago. He is listed among those unaccounted for in Lieutenant Helm's story of the massacre and mention is made of his arriving at Plattsburgh, New York, from Quebec shortly before June 4, 1814.[4]

So it is apparent that the Fort Dearborn massacre had a very important bearing upon the lives of some of the citizens of what later became Berrien County.[5]

The centennial of the building of Fort Dearborn was celebrated on September 26, 1903, and Charles Pokagon, Simon Pokagon's son, was the leader of the Potawatomies who took part in the ceremonies. A replica of the fort was constructed on the original site and was exhibited at Chicago during the Century of Progress.

The last survivor in this locality of the Fort Dearborn massacre is said to have lived north of Paw Paw Lake and about ten miles west. He was called "Old Wapsey" and at the reported age of 110 years, in July of 1893, had told Simon Pokagon of his part in the Fort Dearborn massacre. Wapsey was also known among the Indians as a successful hunter and it is said that he could kill more game with bow and arrow than any ten of the others using the best gun of the white man. He made a specialty of killing bears. It is told that he would chase a bear until it neared his wigwam and then kill it. By so doing he would not have to carry the meat any great distance. He explained his method to C. H. Engle of Hartford, Michigan. He said that when he found the track of a bear he would follow it till nightfall and then he would lie down and sleep. Early the next morning he would again start out on the track. The bear always traveled in a circle, as do most wild animals when chased, and when it neared his wigwam he would increase his speed until he overtook the tired bear and shoot it.[6]

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5. Helm, 15-108; see also Kinzie, 187-199; Quaife (4), 211-261, 378-436; *Ceremonies at the Unveiling of the Bronz Memorial Group of the Chicago Massacre of* 1812.
6. Rowland, 17.

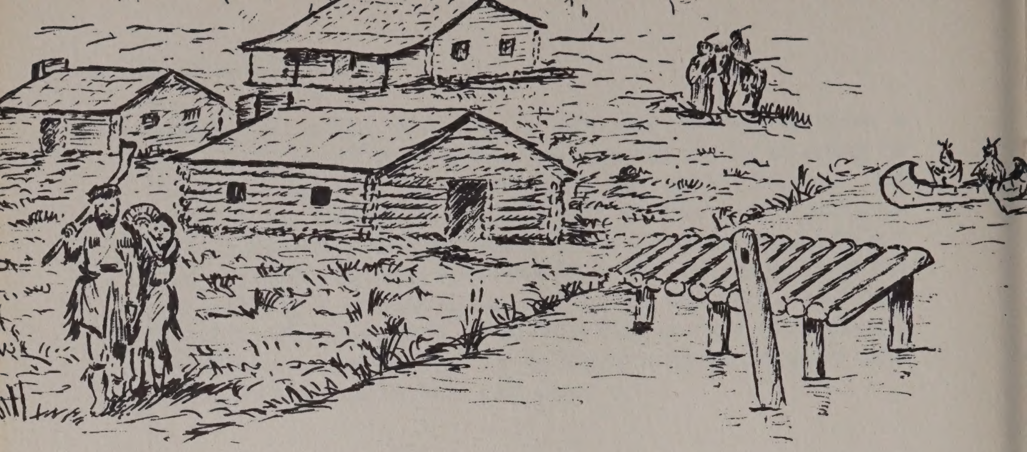
CHAPTER SEVEN

Burnett's Trading Post

The first permanent white settler of St. Joseph was William Burnett. He is said to have landed by canoe between 1775 and 1782 and established his residence and trading post on the west bank of the St. Joseph River, about one and one-half miles upstream from its mouth. He also built a warehouse near the mouth of the river close to the site of where LaSalle's storehouse had been.[1]

It is uncertain when Burnett first came to Michigan. Hurlbut is of the opinion, from information obtained from a relative of the family, that Burnett came to Michigan as early as 1769, and that he spent some time at Bertrand before he became established at the mouth of the St. Joseph River.[2]

Most writers state that Burnett came from New Jersey, but referring again to Hurlbut, he may have come from Scotland, and was spoken of as "William Burnett, the Scotchman." Burnett himself admitted that a mystery enveloped his early years.[3] From a reading of over one hundred of his letters, one would be justified in concluding that Hurlbut's appellation might have



resulted from Burnett's thrifty characteristics. In any event, he was a man of strong, independent character, and when arrested by the British because of his intense loyalty to the Americans, he refused to yield one inch, and was finally released.

In 1803, when Michigan was a part of Indiana Territory, he thought he was being treated injustly by Governor William H. Harrison, who had broken his word with Burnett and other traders. He expressed his opinion in very plain language in a letter to the Governor, enclosed his commission as Justice of the Peace and refused to serve longer as such.[4]

He lingered a while at Detroit and afterwards went to Mackinac Island, where for some time he conducted a trading business. In a letter of July, 1802 he wrote from Michilimackinac that he had sold his peltries for 20,500 livres. His letters indicate that he was fairly well educated.[5] It is said that he was a college-educated man.

In 1782, the Rev. Father La Vi Deaux united in marriage Burnett and Kakima, or Kaw-kee-mee (spelled many ways), daughter of a great chief, Aniquiba, and sister of Chief Topenebee. Her Indian name was Gag-ii-mi-i, meaning "one who steals away." Seven children were born to the Burnetts. Kakima herself was a princess and a power among the Potawatomies. This marriage proved advantageous – Burnett did a very large business with the Indians, trading them blankets, utensils, brooches and gewgaws, as well as whiskey, rifles, hatchets and scalping knives for great quantities of furs of every kind.

Ballard, who probably did not have access to copies of Burnett's letters, reports[6] that Burnett's account books for the year 1796-1797 show an income of over $100,000. The letters of Burnett do not bear this out. In 1787 Burnett wrote that he had nothing to do and ordered goods amounting to a value of less than $5,000; in 1788 he complained that trade was going very slowly on account of the mild winter; in 1790 he missed a great opportunity for want of goods; in 1791 he stated there were no packs at St. Joseph for that year; in 1790 he had twenty packs and had poor hopes, owing to too many traders; in 1794 some goods were damaged and some entirely lost; in 1794 he was the loser of 10,000 livres on two canoe loads of merchandise; in July of 1797 (the year Mr. Ballard cites), Burnett delivered his eighty-four packs of furs at "Makina" and expected they would bring him 47 to 48,000 livres, or about $9,000. According to one report,[7] only 60,000 livres worth of furs from St. Joseph were sold that year, or about $11,000 worth. That would include the furs of all St. Joseph traders. In 1797, according to records,[8] the average price of a pack of furs was about $75. One record[9] shows that Burnett sold ninety-nine packs in 1796, so his income would amount to about $7,500. In 1798 he requested generous prices from the merchants from whom he bought merchandise; in 1798 he had eighty packs of furs and wanted "living prices" for the goods he was to purchase; in 1803 he didn't want to throw away his goods at a loss and complained about so many peddling traders who were ruining all the trade.

As a comparison, Bertrand reported that he had made $16,000 for the years 1833 and 1834. While all indications are that Burnett did more business than Bertrand, the figure of $100,000 is still improbable when the above statements are taken into consideration.

Besides his trading post a mile or two from the mouth of the St. Joseph River and his warehouse at the mouth of the river, he owned a house on the Kankakee River where he spent his winters, and a warehouse in Chicago. He once sketched a map on which Chicago and its location appeared. It is among the first documents in which the site was correctly given by that name. He once ordered his dry goods from Detroit to be brought by pack horse and the heavy goods, such as rum, powder and ball, by vessel to be sent to "Mackina" (Mackinaw) and from there by boat to Chicago. He stated that he had horses of his own to bring light merchandise by land, but if goods were to be sent by canoe it would require three men to a canoe. In his orders for trade goods, among other things, he sent for two kegs of nails, a ploughshare and two dozen black ostrich feathers and some garden seed.[10]

His trading post was located on land later owned by Samuel G. Langley in Section 25, St. Joseph Township, on the west side of the river, north of Napier Bridge.[11] The post buildings were said to have been located below the bluff on the river bank a short distance north of the east end of Miller Drive in the City of St. Joseph.

Burnett's home cabin nestled at the foot of the hill about three or four hundred feet from the river. Between the house and the river was a well-kept orchard of apples, as well as peaches, quinces and cherries.[12] The labor and expense of planting this orchard may be imagined when it is understood that the plants were transported hundreds of miles with neither railroad nor steamboat as a means of conveyance and nearly all the way through a trackless wilderness.

It is said that after his marriage he cleared large fields, erected a valuable mansion house, barn, storehouses, etc., and cultivated the earth. One traveler from Indiana in June, 1809, when he was near Bertrand, stated that he was informed that a trader at the mouth of the river had raised several crops of wheat which were as good as could be produced any place.[13] While corn is not among the crops mentioned in connection with Burnett's farming, either he or some of the tribes of Indians must have raised more than they needed for their own use, for on April 20, 1783, Captain Robertson, then at Michilimackinac, wrote to a Captain Brehm that he intended to send a vessel to St. Joseph and the Grand River for a load of corn as the traders made an extra charge for transportation.[14] In letters of Burnett written in 1786 he stated he had two hundred twenty bushel of corn to sell and in 1788 he had one hundred bushel of wheat for sale.

Burnett was associated during the first year of his operations at St. Joseph with one John Sayers. Most of his trading goods were brought from Montreal and at the close of the season he generally journeyed to Mackinac to sell his furs, after which he returned to St. Joseph where we are informed he continued in trade peaceably until the officer commanding the post at Mackinac requested him to come to that place and there proposed to him that he should form a connection with McBeth and Grant for a monopoly of the St. Joseph trade. Burnett showed his independence by declining to enter into any such arrangement, whereupon he was informed that he would not be allowed to return to St. Joseph at all. Although a treaty of peace between the British and the Americans had been signed in 1783, the British kept control of the fur trade in Michigan for thirteen years thereafter. It goes without saying that at that particular time a commandant of a British post did not have any love for an independent American trader, and it is equally certain that the American trader saw no reason why he should go out of his way to oblige the British. In this case, however, Burnett was settled at St. Joseph, his funds were invested there and he made a virtue of necessity by agreeing to the proposition for one season.

When the year had expired, he made a settlement with McBeth and Grant and refused pre-emptorily to have any further dealings with them. His former partners then informed the commandant of his decision and added that Burnett had received wampum belts at St. Joseph from Mr. Butler, an Indian agent of the United States. This was a serious offense in the eyes of the British and Burnett was at once confined in the guardhouse at Mackinac until the first vessel sailed south, when he was shipped to Detroit and afterwards to Montreal, where he was released and remained until he found an opportunity to come to St. Joseph by way of New York and Philadelphia, as the English authorities refused to grant him a pass by way of Mackinac. Upon arriving at St. Joseph, he found his property had been destroyed by his clerks and what little remained he was obliged to give to the Indians, and the record states, "and then he commenced to trade anew."[15]

The strife between the British traders and Burnett was fierce. Sometime in 1803 an Englishman named Pattison came to the mouth of the St. Joseph River and proceeded to build a house. He naturally began to sing the praises of the British which was anathema to Burnett, who had just as strong ideas about the Americans as Pattison had about the British. Pattison complained to his friends in Detroit, who were British sympathizers, that Burnett had ridiculed the British government and had called his house a hog sty. Many letters were exchanged, but nothing came of the quarrel.[16]

On one occasion, when the trading of liquor was forbidden, the sailing vessel *General Hunter* arrived at St. Joseph with a cargo of goods, part of which was for Mr. Pattison and part for Kinzie, then located at Chicago. Unfortunately for Pattison he was in Detroit, and Chandonai, a clerk for Burnett, promised to take care of his merchandise. Part of the cargo contained liquor and was liable to be seized by the Indians. The captain of the sloop was informed of this but insisted upon unloading the liquor with the balance of the cargo, and so it was landed. The Indians had been watching the proceedings and when the liquor was put on shore they very willingly enforced the orders of the government and seized the liquor which had been illegally shipped. One can imagine the glee of Burnett and the outburst of Pattison, already at sword's point with Burnett and the Americans in general, when he returned and learned of the loss of his precious spirits.

A very interesting incident occurred at Burnett's Trading Post during the War of 1812. The Potawatomies were about to hold a council to determine which side they would fight for in the impending war between Great Britain and America, and British and American agents had come for the purpose of being present on that occasion. The American commandant at Detroit sent a French half-breed by the name of Jean Baptiste Chandonai (also spelled Chandonnet and Chadronet). He was well known there, having been employed for a number of years by Burnett. The agent sent by the British was Lieutenant John Chandonai, an uncle of Baptiste. The elder Chandonai, enraged at finding his nephew there in the interest of the Americans, demanded that he should join the British or surrender himself as a prisoner. Baptiste told his uncle that he would not abandon the American cause, nor would he be taken prisoner. He thereupon cocked his rifle, which he had in his hands, and told his uncle if he should attempt to approach him and should pass a certain line, which he indicated on the ground between them, that he would do so at the peril of his life. The uncle, being a brave and determined man, drew his sword and boldly advanced, but the instant he crossed the line a ball from his nephew's gun entered his heart and he fell dead.

The Chippewas of the British party threatened Baptiste, who informed them he was sorry he had to kill his uncle, but if any of them crossed the line, the first one would be a dead Indian, but if they would be quiet and help him bury his uncle he would give them plenty of fire water. This plan was agreed upon by the Chippewas for the consideration of ten gallons of rum. The dead man was buried and young Chandonai left without delay. The ten gallons of rum were delivered to them the next morning.[17]

Chandonai was a clerk for John Kinzie at Chicago at the time of the Fort Dearborn Massacre, and he is said to have been instrumental in saving the life of Mrs. Nathan Heald. He also acted as interpreter at Greenville when negotiations for the treaty were being held, in 1814, and signed as one of the witnesses. In 1831 he went to Kansas to select lands for the Potawatomies who were being moved there. He was also present at the signing of the Chicago Treaties in 1832 and 1833. By the treaty at Chicago in 1821, Chandonai, son of Chip-pe-wa-qua, was granted two sections of land on the River St. Joseph and by the Chicago Treaty of 1833 he was granted the sum of $2500.[18]

In the winter of 1811 Chandonai, with Isaac Burnett (son of William) and B. Ducharme took the British traders of this area prisoners of the United States and delivered them to Detroit. As a result, no other British trader dared to come to the St. Joseph Valley with his wares. In 1813 the British arrested Chandonai for murdering his uncle and for treason and John Kinzie and Isaac Burnett for treason. Chandonai was transferred to Detroit with irons on hands and feet before he was jailed in the Fort at Amherstburg from which he later escaped. Kinzie, also in irons, was put aboard ship to be sent to England but his ship was forced by a storm to take shelter in Nova Scotia, where Kinzie likewise escaped and finally made his way back to Fort Dearborn.[19] No record has been found of any trial of Isaac Burnett. He may have also escaped or been released when peace was declared. He was alive in 1821, as he was ceded land by a treaty of that date.

Hurlbut states that Burnett and his wife Kakima died at St. Joseph in 1814, that she survived him by two weeks and they were both buried a few feet north of the Hoyt house, upon the bluff overlooking the lake.[20] (The Hoyt house was located on the southeast corner of State and Pleasant Streets in the City of St. Joseph, a short block from the bluff.) This cannot be true regarding Kakima as she is said to have been in Saginaw in 1815 and in 1836 she signed the Tippecanoe Treaty.

Burnett's wife Kakima had great influence among both the whites and the Indians.

> During the summer of 1815, some three or four years after the death of her husband, she appeared before a council of the chief men of the tribe at Saginong (Saginaw), one of the chief towns of the Potawatomies, and asked that a grant of land be made to her children, naming them all except her son James, who seems to have been left out.[21]

Because of her influence, later James, Isaac, Abraham and Jacob Burnett were each granted two sections of land, and Rebecca and Nancy "children of Cakima, sister of Tipinibe" were each granted one section of land, and John was granted two sections of land.

> The land granted to the persons shall begin on the north bank of the River St. Joseph about two miles from the mouth and shall extend up and back from said river for quantity.[22]

This includes much of the land in what is now called Fairplain, just south of Benton Harbor, Michigan. It is on the east side of the river, not the north side.

Abraham was granted three sections of land; Nancy, Rebecca and James, one section; and William, "a grandson of Kaukeama, sister of Topenibe" one section. James Burnett was granted one section of land by the treaty of October 27, 1832, signed on the Tippecanoe River.

After the death of her husband William, Kakima went to live with, or near her son Abraham in Indiana. As stated before, she was one of the signers of the treaty signed "at a camp on the Tippecanoe River" on April 11, 1836. This treaty was also signed by Abraham's beautiful Indian wife, Dah-moosh-ke-kaw.[23] So, unless Kakima died after April 11, 1836, and before the death march in 1838, she was probably taken west with the other Indians in 1838.

Burnett's son Abraham left Michigan and moved to the Tippecanoe country in Indiana. It is said that he was a bitter enemy of the whites and fought with the Indians against them at the Battle of Tippecanoe. While there, he became a person of importance and was known as Chief Abraham, or Abram. It was also here that he married the very beautiful full-blood Indian girl Dah-moosh-ke-kaw. His death occurred about 1827. His will was probated in Allen County, Indiana, about 1828.

There was a younger Abraham Burnett who was born about 1811. He is the Abraham who served as interpreter for McCoy during the establishment of Carey Mission. He attended the Choctaw Academy in Kentucky. The Tipton Papers assert that he was the grandson of Chief Chebass. His biography[24] states that he was the son of Kaw-kee-me. These statements are in direct conflict, so one must be in error. It is possible, though doubtful, that he was the son of Kaw-kee-me. It would be unusual, however, for parents to designate two of their sons by the same name.

Due to the fact that the records show that the older Abraham died without issue, the younger Abraham could not have been his son. It may be that this boy simply adopted the name of the prominent friend of the Indians, as did young Chief Topenebee just before he went west. In any event, the younger Abraham Burnett married Mary Knoffloch in Indiana in 1842. They moved to Sugar Creek, Kansas, in 1848. He died on June 14, 1870. His wife was a shrewd woman and when Abraham died she kept all knowledge of it from his tribe until she had time to hide all his personal belongings. The Potawatomies had a custom of visiting the home of a dead chief before his burial and taking anything they wanted as a momento of the dead man.

Burnett's son Isaac died about 1820. Nothing is known of Jacob, another son of William. Nancy Burnett married John H. Davis and had two sons. Rebecca died in 1840. She never married, but had two daughters. Burnett's granddaughter Martha married Francis Palm, at that time one of Detroit's wealthiest citizens, and also owner of the Book-Cadillac Hotel in Detroit.

One writer states that Burnett left St. Joseph in the summer of 1812 to visit his several trading posts and never returned, and that he might have been a victim of the Fort Dearborn Massacre. This rumor springs from the statement of Mrs. John Kinzie, who escaped the massacre by boat. While she and other members of her party were in the boat off-shore from the fort, it was approached by a savage with a pistol in his hand, who said he was looking for Burnett, as he had an account to settle with him.[25]

Burnett's son John, who married a squaw named No-ta-no-quay, was living in Detroit in 1806 and was sheriff of Wayne County, which at that time included territory from Detroit to

Lake Michigan. He was at the Chicago massacre and he may have been the Burnett referred to in *Wau Bun.*[26] In 1827 John Burnett's estate was probated in Monroe County, Territory of Michigan, which at that time included the present Berrien County. His debts were listed as over $17,000 and the only assets were the two sections of land granted him in the Treaty of Chicago, which land was appraised at $1600, or $1.25 per acre. Probably this land would have been sold and the purchase price squandered but for the provisions of the grant that it could not be sold without the permission of the President of the United States.

Burnett's grandson David was captured by the Indians at Detroit in 1813. He was about to be burned alive, but a friend interceded and bought his liberty for five gallons of whiskey.

Some of Burnett's account books are in the South Bend, Indiana, Museum. They show accounts from 1782 to 1835. Others are in the Burton Historical Collections at the Detroit Public Library, showing accounts in 1796 and 1797. A letter book of over one hundred letters written from 1786 to 1803 is at the New York Historical Society, New York City. Most accounts were kept in Halifax currency. Halifax pound currency was divided into four Spanish dollars. New York currency was divided into eight York shillings, or one Spanish dollar. The New York currency system was prohibited in upper Canada, April 14, 1821, and after that, all accounts were kept in Halifax currency.[27] Fortunately the letter book of Burnett has been preserved in the New York Historical Society, New York. Thirty-five letters are printed in full in *Chicago Antiquities.*[28] Two letters appear in *Michigan Pioneer Collections.*[29]

After William Burnett's death, about 1812, his oldest son James managed the trading post on the St. Joseph River until about 1833.[30] James Burnett took an Indian girl for his wife. She was Menache, daughter of She-cau-go-se-qua. About two years later they separated. One boy named Wimego, known as William Burnett, was born of this informal marriage. Menache remarried and died at Sugar Creek, Kansas, about 1850.

James served as a lieutenant in the United States Army during the war of 1812.[31] When the James Burnett land was sold on April 5, 1834, by an administrator of his estate, the deed stated that James Burnett died July 3, 1833 and the tract of land containing about ninety-one acres was situated on the St.

Joseph River one mile from the town of St. Joseph. The deed also stated that the land was commonly known as Burnett's Orchard, and was located in the northwest fraction of Section 25, St. Joseph Township. The price obtained was \$533.75.[32]

In later years a ferry was operated at the site of Burnett's Trading Post as there were no bridges in this locality across the St. Joseph River at that time.

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5. Kelley, 87; see also *Michigan Pioneer Collections,* VIII, 529.
6. Ballard (1), 62.
7. *Michigan Pioneer Collections,* XIX, 14.
8. Cartwright, 205.
9. Johnson, 97.
10. Lewis Bond Papers, "The Earliest Board of Trade," *Michigan Pioneer Collections,* XXXVII, 426n; see also Hurlbut, 49-77.
11. Kelley, 121.
12. Weissert, 159.
13. J. M. D. (Johnston), 47; see also Hurlbut, 56.
14. *Michigan Pioneer Collections,* XI, 359.
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17. Weissert, 161-162.

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20. Hurlbut, 77.
21. Kelley, 94.
22. Kappler, 199.
23. Winters, Plate XVIII.
24. *Kansas State Historical Society,* 371-373.
25. Kinzie, 182.
26. Hurlbut, 75.
27. *Michigan Pioneer Collections,* XX, 679.
28. Hurlbut, 50-74.
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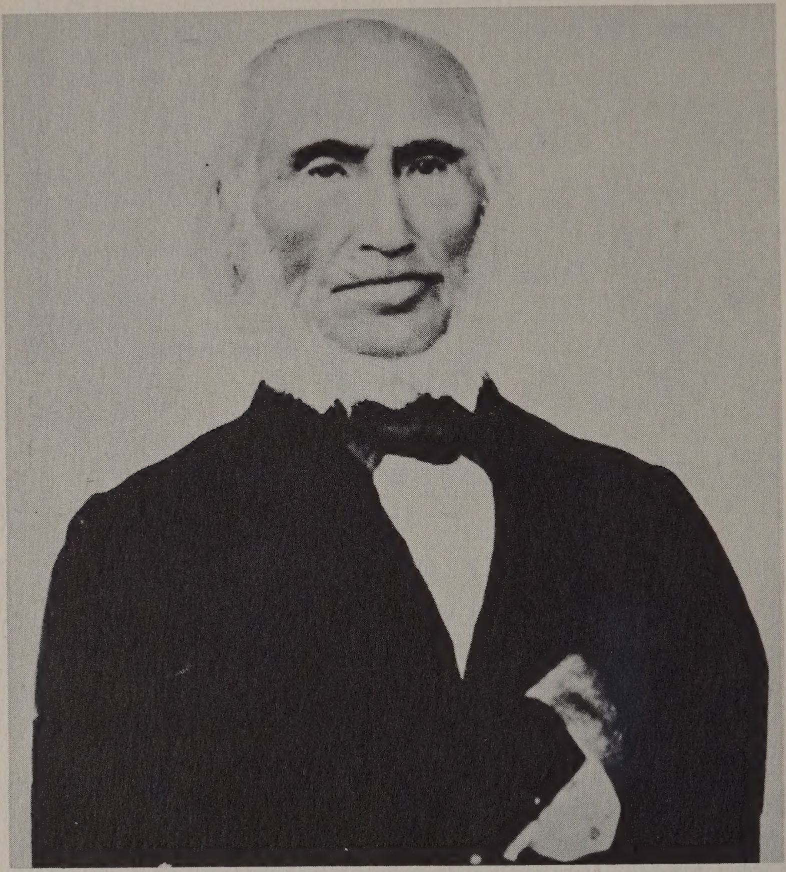
30. Winslow (3), 19.
31. Kelley, 92.
32. Vol. B of *Deeds,* p. 129.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Joseph Bertrand, the Village of Bertrand and Saint Mary's Academy

Probably the first established trader at Parc Aux Vaches (or The Cow Pasture, or Cow Pens), so named because so many buffalo lived there, was Antonie LeClere, Sr. (spelled many ways). This place was later known as Bertrand. Previous to the capture of Fort St. Joseph by Pontiac forces in 1763, LeClere had been employed by the British as a blacksmith at that fort. He was originally from Montreal and married into a prominent Indian family. His duties required all kinds of work with metal, including that of a gunsmith. After the raid he went to Detroit, but about 1775 returned to the St. Joseph River at the crossing of the great Sauk trail, where he again took up the work of a blacksmith and gunsmith and traded with the Indians. In 1800 he moved to Milwaukee where he became a full-time trader and made a fortune. It is said that he did not sell liquor to the Indians.

LeClere would go to Detroit in the spring, select his goods, and about the month of May a small sailing vessel would



Joseph Bertrand — 1780-1860. (*Courtesy Dr. Hazel Eidson*)

leave Detroit with his purchases, and those of William Burnett and John Kinzie at Chicago, and deliver their goods at their various posts.

LeClere (or LeClerc) was followed by John Kinzie, a trader as well as a silversmith, who was the reputed father of the City of Chicago. Kinzie, who was called by the Indians "Shaw-nee-aw-kee" meaning "The Silver Man," was at Fort Wayne in 1792 and on the Maumee until 1794 when he moved to Parc Aux Vaches. He left for Chicago in 1803 or 1804 and lived there until his death, except for four years, from 1812 to 1816. Kinzie was succeeded at Parc Aux Vaches by Joseph Bertrand.[1]

While Kinzie was still at Parc Aux Vaches, plans were made to establish a fort at Chicago. In 1803 a party, consisting of one officer and six men, was sent from Detroit to the mouth of the St. Joseph River to mark a trail and choose suitable camping places for the company which was to follow. A site was to be selected at the mouth of the St. Joseph River for a temporary encampment. In case the overland route should be found practicable for a company with pack horses for carrying supplies, orders were to be issued for such a venture. Apparently the report of the reconnoitering party was favorable, for Lieutenant James Strode Swearingen was chosen to command such a company of United States soldiers, consisting of sixty-nine officers and men to journey overland and establish this fort. This party left Detroit on July 14, 1803, for Chicago and traveled an average of twenty-two miles each day.

Old brick Catholic church at Bertrand, built in 1837 *and torn down in* 1909.

On Monday, July 25th, they arrived at the River St. Joseph and encamped on the bank near "Kinzey's Improvement" (Bertrand). Seventeen of the party, with the baggage, went by boat to the mouth of the St. Joseph River, and the remainder of the party followed by land. They remained at the mouth of the river from July 18th to August 12th, awaiting the arrival of Captain Whistler and his family, who had sailed from Detroit on the U. S. S. *Schooner Tracy*. He was in command of the whole expedition. From the St. Joseph River, the Whistler family and part of the men with the artillery and heavy baggage went by rowboat and the remainder of the party marched along the foot of the lake to what is now Chicago. After the fort was constructed and garrisoned, one year later, it was named Fort Dearborn. So we have the knowledge of another historical event occurring on our very doorstep.[2] Later Whistler was promoted to major and served as commandant of Fort Dearborn from 1803 to 1810.[3]

Joseph Bertrand located at Parc Aux Vaches between 1803 and 1808.[4] Kinzie did not leave Parc Aux Vaches until 1803 or 1804 while Fort Dearborn was being established and garrisoned, and Bertrand is said to have followed him later at Parc Aux Vaches. We are sure that Bertrand was there in 1808 because the baptismal records of Fort St. Joseph record the birth of his son on February 8, 1808.

Joseph Bertrand was born at Mackinac on October 8, 1778, son of Laurent Bertrand and Marie Theresa Dulignon,[5] who were married on January 27, 1762, in Montreal.* Theresa was born in 1738.

Joseph followed the custom of many French traders and married Mona, baptized Madelon (also spelled Madeline), whose Indian name was Mouto, a full-blood Potawatomie. She was the daughter of Chief Topenebee. She had been born near the portage landing and died at Bertrand on October 14, 1846, near where she had been born. This date appeared on her tombstone, with the words, "Ellen, wife of Joseph Bertrand." The stone has since been destroyed. Her daughter Julia explained the error in the name by stating that the stone cutter had misunderstood her name. It is said that Madelon preferred the Indian's way of life and spent most of her time in a tepee at the rear of Bertrand's house.

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*Joseph's father Laurent was born Nov. 8, 1741, of the marriage of Jaques Bertrand (b. Sept. 5, 1699) and Marie Louise Dumouchel (b. 1710). Joseph's grandfather Jaques was born of the marriage of Jean Bertrand (b. 1667) and Marie Charlotte Board, also called Rivirdra. Joseph's father lived in Mackinac in 1778-1782 and was engaged in the fur trade.

The following children were born of this marriage at Bertrand, Michigan: Joseph (b. Feb. 8, 1808), Benjamin (b. June 25, 1812), Laurent, Theresa, Amable, St. Luke, Julia Ann and Samuel. All of these children, except Samuel, were named in various treaties. The record of Samuel is found in a letter from B. A. Bertrand, son of Benjamin, dated Jan. 31, 1897, in which he mentioned Samuel, and in a letter dated Sept. 1, 1832, from Joseph Bertrand, Sr., to Tipton, in which he gave the names of his children as "Thereza, Benjamin, Amable, Laurence and Samuel," omitting the names of Joseph, St. Luke and Julia Ann. Samuel is also named in deeds recorded in the office of the Register of Deeds for Berrien County, Michigan.[6]

In newspaper clippings in the Northern Indiana Historical Society at South Bend, Indiana, appears a statement that Joseph Bertrand, Sr., married a widow named Lucia White who was one-quarter Indian. No other reference to a second marriage has been found.

Sometime after the death of Madeline, Joseph Bertrand, Sr., moved to St. Marys, Kansas, where he died on September 8, 1865. McMurdy and Winger write that he moved there about 1858.[7]

Members of the Bertrand family who were granted land or money by the different treaties were:

Chicago Treaty of 1821:

> "Madeline, wife of Joseph Bertrand, a Potawatomie woman" was granted one section of land on the north side of the river at Parc Aux Vaches, and Joseph, Jr., Benjamin, Laurent, Theresa and Amabel, "children of Madeline" each one-half section of land at the portage of the Kankakee River.

Wabash Treaty, October, 1826:

> St. Luke and Julia Ann, "children of Madeline" were granted one section of land. Undoubtedly the two last

named children were born after the Chicago Treaty of 1821 and before the Wabash Treaty of 1828.

Carey Mission Treaty, September 20, 1828:

> Madeline was granted one section of land and Joseph received $2000 for goods heretofore sold to the Indians.

Tippecanoe River Treaties of October 27 *and* 28, 1832:

> Joseph, Sr., was awarded $1500 and Joseph, Jr.'s, children were granted one-half section jointly.

Chicago Treaties of September 26 *and* 27, 1833:

> Joseph, Jr., received $300 and Joseph, Sr., received $652; Madeline received $200; Joseph, Jr., Luke, Benjamin, Lawrence (Laurent), Theresa, Amabel and Julia Ann received $200 each; Joseph, Mary M. and M. L. received $100 each. The last named were probably from another branch of the Bertrand family.

Bertrand's house was made of logs brought from the old mission church at Fort St. Joseph. It is said that the Indian chief who sold this building had to flee the country as a result of his act.[8] Newspaper clippings in the Northern Indiana Historical Society at South Bend, Indiana, state that Bertrand's first dwelling was located in what later became the bed of the river and his fur press was situated on the brow of a hill on the north side of the Chicago road, which originally was known as the Great Sauk Trail.

A word picture of one Bertrand is given by Simon Pokagon:

> In those days I took great pleasure in hunting, fishing and trapping with an old man by the name of Bertrand. There are many white men yet living who were personally acquainted with that remarkable man. He was a person well calculated to please and instruct a boy in his knowledge of the habits of animals, and of places and things with which he was personally acquainted. He was of medium height, uncommonly broad shouldered, and well developed in body and limb. When laughing or excited in talking, he opened his mouth so wide that his great

> double teeth could be plainly seen. He always appeared in the best of spirits, having the most hearty laugh of any man I ever knew. As old as I now am, I would walk twenty miles to hear such a laugh. His skin was dark for an Indian, notwithstanding he claimed to be one-quarter French. When speaking of himself, he always talked as if he was a white man. On public occasions, among our people, owing to his strength and courage, he was regarded as a sort of police force. I recollect one day during a feast some women came running to him in great excitement, telling him some half-breeds had brought fire water with them and were giving some to little boys. He started for them on the double-quick, and before they realized what he was doing, he seized all their bottles and broke them against a rock. There were three in the party, and they all rushed for him with sticks and clubs. He knocked each one down in turn with a single blow of his fist. As they lay on the ground, a white man present said, "Bertrand, you struck those Indians awful blows." "Yes, me tells you me did. Indians hab no idea how hard a white man can strike." For that timely reproof he was given a place at the head of the feast.
>
> He prided himself in speaking English, which he always tried to do if any were present who he thought understood the language.
>
> Among his white neighbors, he was always referred to as "the 'Injun' who murders the English language."[9]

In 1839 the St. Joseph River at Bertrand was 280 feet wide.[10] The post was named Bertrand in 1814, after Joseph Bertrand. The little settlement of Bertrand was on the main stage route and was a stopping place for man and beast, so Joseph Bertrand became acquainted with many men of importance. About 1813 he moved his establishment from the west side of the river to the east side, at the present site of Bertrand.[11]

One account states that Bertrand simply acted as an agent for William Burnett, and that Burnett supplied goods to Bertrand. One entry in one of Burnett's account books in the South Bend, Indiana, Museum indicates that Bertrand was in the employ of Burnett, at least for a short time. There is a possibility that Bertrand was first in the employ of Burnett and then of the American Fur Company and later established his own business. In 1821 and 1822 he was listed as an employee of the American Fur Company:

> Joseph Bertrand, for the trade at St. Joseph's (of Lake Michigan) and its dependencies. Michilimackinac, 22 August 1821,

and again in August, 1822, "for trade of St. Joseph and Kinkiki (Kankakee) and its dependencies."[12]

An incident which shows the generosity of Bertrand was related by McCoy. On February 8, 1823, the inhabitants of Carey Mission had completely exhausted their supply of corn. McCoy set out with one Indian to buy a supply from the Indians who had little to sell. On the way he met Bertrand and explained their need of food. Bertrand unhesitatingly said, "I got some corn, some flour; I give you half. Suppose you die, I die too." McCoy loaded his horse with both corn and flour and returned to the mission. McCoy had a similar experience with an Indian squaw who offered him food from her scanty supply.

Still another historical event occurred at Bertrand shortly before the War of 1812. Tenskwatawa (spelled many ways), a Shawnee, took upon himself the title of "Prophet." He was a twin brother of Tecumseh who was actively engaged in forming the various Indian tribes into a confederacy. In May of 1810, to further his purpose, the Prophet called a council of the chiefs and head men of the Potawatomies, Chippewas and Ottawas at "a place called the cow pasture on the banks of the St. Joseph of Michigan." Deputies of the Delaware were present, as was also Win-a-mac, a distinguished chief of the Potawatomies, and they were successful in preventing the Potawatomie tribe from coming under the control of the Prophet.

At one time, John Kinzie was a trader at Bertrand, as was also Joseph Bailey, an adventurous Frenchman who was the leading character in Mrs. Julia Altrocchi's intensely interesting novel, *Wolves Against the Moon.* The life of a trader among the Indians, especially during the perilous time of war, was not one of ease, but was filled with adventure and peril.*

***In a letter dated Feb. 12, 1897, Benjamin Bertrand stated that during the War of 1812 the British offered a reward of one hundred pounds for his father's head.**

The contents of a letter from John Kinzie to Governor Cass, dated September 22, 1814, disclose that Bertrand had acted as interpreter at Greenville in the summer of 1814; that Kinzie had learned that the British were endeavoring to apprehend Bertrand as their enemy and that Kinzie was trying to protect him. Kinzie hurried to Bertrand's camp and found a very frightened Mrs. Bertrand, who told him that Bertrand had fled to "Topuneeber's" (Topenebee) village for protection. Chief Topenebee had only a small party and he also feared the Indians who were fighting with the British.[14] Bertrand escaped, for in a letter of January 21, 1815, from the Indian agent, Benjamin F. Stickney, to Charles Larned, then Attorney General of Michigan Territory, it is stated that Bertrand presented himself at St. Mary's and requested his pay as a spy and interpreter.[15] The interpreters employed there were described as,

> active young men, most of them connected by marriage or consanguinity with the Indians and all of them possessing considerably influence. Merely to be the medium of intelligence between us and the Indians is the smallest part of their duty. They are wanted to traverse the Indian Country, to reside at the larger villages, to communicate daily and hourly with the Indians, to remove the effect of improper representations, to keep an eye upon British emissaries, to bring in unlicensed traders, to search for and recover stolen horses, to serve as expresses in the uninhabited country, to collect the Indians at Councils and Treaties, and generally to form the link of communication between them and us.[16]

There is a small, closely hand-written manuscript in the Archives of the general library at Notre Dame University at South Bend, Indiana, entitled, "Chronicles on the different places attended in the diocese of Detroit by the priests of the Holy Cross." Its date is presumed to be 1847. It may have been written by more than one priest as indicated by the difference in penmanship. The writer or writers are unknown. Some of the information contained in the booklet pertains to the village of Bertrand.

In 1830 the Very Rev. Stephen Badin, designated in the above chronicles as Vicar General of Bardstown and of Cin-

cinnati, served at Bertrand. He was succeeded by Rev. Smith, and towards the end of 1832 Rev. L. Deseille, a Belgium priest, arrived. "He baptized thousands of Indians and was highly esteemed of them." He is said to have prophesied that the town of Bertrand, then very flourishing, would fall very low; that the family of Mr. Joseph Bertrand, the founder of the town to which he gave his name, should become poor; that a cross which he erected during the time of the Jubilee of 1826, 'and which can yet be seen in the midst of the old Indian Cemetery one mile from Bertrand' should never be touched by the axe nor by fire."

The old log mission stood about twenty rods down the river from the little brick building near the old willow tree where Father Badin said mass once a month. This willow was planted by Sister Angela. It is said that her funeral services were conducted under its branches. The log mission was nearly thirty feet square. After the brick church was built, the old log chapel was sold to William Malone and moved to his farm where it served as a stable.[13]

Later Father Sorin desired to establish a permanent home for the sisters who were at Notre Dame. The Bishop of Vincennes was not in favor of this project. One of the missions committed to the care of the Holy Cross was at Bertrand in the State of Michigan, and as a result within the diocese of Detroit. The Bishop of Detroit gave his consent and so the home and school were established and on July 16, 1844, five sisters moved into a house owned by Joseph Bertrand.

St. Mary's Academy was incorporated April 2, 1850, by Aglac De la Cheptais, Mathurine Salon, Theresa Dussauix, Prosperine Chanson and their associates in offices, by Act 314 of the Public Acts of Michigan, 1850.[17] The legal name of this institution was St. Mary's Academy, but the full name designating this school was "The Academy of the Sisters of the Holy Cross, Bertrand, Michigan." The sisters conducted domestic affairs at Notre Dame while also caring for their convent and academy at Bertrand.*

*It is said that in the early days before Notre Dame became known world wide as a University, those few priests then stationed at what is now Notre Dame were in the habit of walking to Bertrand, celebrating mass and returning on foot before breakfast. Those early missionaries led a life of severe privations and gloried in it.

With the founding of this academy, Bertrand gradually became an important religious center. Students from all over the United States and some from foreign countries attended this academy. This was the first Catholic school for girls in the State of Michigan outside of Detroit.*[18]

In 1854 the site of St. Mary's College was purchased and as opposition to the removal from Bertrand no longer existed, the frame buildings from Bertrand were moved to the present site of St. Mary's College, north of South Bend, Indiana. The new site was occupied in August of 1855 and twenty-five sisters moved from Bertrand at that time.

Another bit of history that concerned the vicinity of Bertrand, which showed that the Indian was learning the ways of the white man, occurred in 1831. Early in the summer, a Miami hunting party killed a Potawatomie chief, and as a result the Potawatomies threatened war. They first demanded $50,000 blood money. If this sum was not paid, the Potawatomies threatened war in the spring before the leaves were as large as squirrel ears. General William Marshall was sent to settle this difficulty and a grand council was held "on the St. Joseph" (probably at Bertrand) and he succeeded in accomplishing his mission. The Potawatomies had undisputed possession of that portion of Bertrand included in the reservation until it was ceded to the United States by the Treaty of 1833. Soon after, partly on account of the establishment of Carey Mission, settlers began to move in and occupy the land.

The village of Bertrand was surveyed and platted by Alonzo Bennett in 1833 for a stock company by the name of Bertrand Association and a group of speculators moved in. One of them, named Barber, after the closing of navigation in the winter, bought all the salt along the river and held it until he raised the price to ten or twelve dollars per barrel. It is said that one farmer traded one hundred bushels of potatoes for one barrel of salt.

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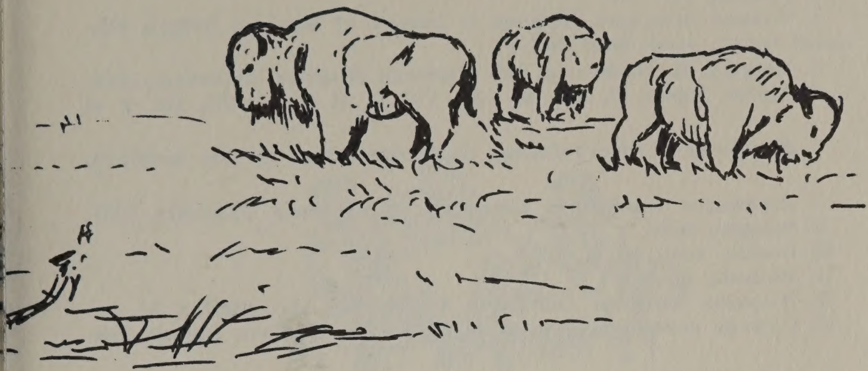
*In December of 1854, when Sister Angela was at Bertrand, she went to Niles on a shopping trip to purchase candy and knickknacks for the school's Christmas tree. It is said that she traveled in a wood box which "old Joseph" had made into a sled. "Old Joseph" was Joseph Nicolas Loute, a native of France who, for his board and room, indentured himself to the sisters "for one hundred years."

In the summer of 1834 Bertrand told a visitor that he had made $16,000 within the last two years, a sizable sum in those days, but that he wanted to leave because of annual bouts with fever. One interesting comment growing out of this visit was that Bertrand did not sell liquor to the Indians.[19]

It is stated that in 1837, when Father De Seille felt death approaching, as he was administering to himself the Blessed Sacrament, he was supported in the arms of Joseph Bertrand.[20]

The oldest child born of the marriage of Joseph and Madelon was Joseph, Jr. He married Mary Doan and from this marriage was born Joseph Hamilton Bertrand. On May 26, 1836, after the death of his first wife, Joseph, Jr., married Elizabeth Ann Jackson, once a teacher at Pokagon's Village. Elizabeth was born in Maryland, December 29, 1810, and died at Wamego, Kansas, on September 10, 1888. This marriage took place at Fort Wayne, Indiana. Joseph, Jr., signed several treaties, either as a witness or as an interpreter. He moved to Sugar Creek, Kansas, in 1840 and in 1848 he accompanied some of the Michigan Potawatomies to what later became St. Marys, Kansas.

Benjamin Hamilton Bertrand, son of Joseph Bertrand, Sr., was born at Bertrand on June 25, 1812. He attended Carey Mission School, then entered a private school in Detroit, and later went to a government school in Kentucky. He returned and served in his father's store for six years and then went in business for himself until 1850. He was appointed postmaster at Bertrand in 1845 and served about four years. In May of 1851, Benjamin H. Bertrand started from Michigan, under contract from the



government, for St. Marys, Kansas, with six hundred and sixty Indian men, women and children. The town of St. Marys was laid out by Benjamin H. Bertrand on August 8, 1866. The main street in the town is named after him. His first wife died in 1864 and on May 22, 1869, he married Clara Whitaker, once a teacher at Pokagon's Village, and from this marriage Benjamin A. Bertrand was born. Benjamin H. died at St. Marys on April 25, 1888.

One who was acclaimed as the most prominent of Bertrand's citizens was James S. Merritt, who married Philomine Bertrand, daughter of Joseph, Jr. At the age of fourteen he received a first-grade certificate as a teacher and taught school at that tender age. When only twenty-three years of age he was Attorney General for the Union Pacific Railway and a confidential advisor to Jay Gould. He enlisted in the Union Army and was promoted to the rank of lieutenant. At his death in 1885, the president of the B. & O. Railway Company tendered his special railroad car to take Merritt's body to his home in Wamego, Kansas. The State Legislature adjourned and the members attended the funeral in a body.[21]

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CHAPTER NINE

Indian Treaties of 1821, 1828 *and* 1833

The results of the executing of these three treaties were of far-reaching importance, especially to the Indians of this and surrounding areas, and resulted in an entirely new era and mode of life for them. The government officials were mainly interested in opening this vast and rich area to white settlers and they made no pretense of fairness in their dealings with the Indians, who were ignorant and trusting. They were induced to sign the treaties by the promise of a paid teacher, farmer and blacksmith and a small annual payment, and oftentimes by copious draughts of whiskey-spiked tobacco. The chiefs and head men were, in a sense, bribed by being allowed to retain a section or two of their own land. Not all Indians realized what would be the effects of the provisions of the treaties or that soon their important hunting rights would be lost and their land occupied by white settlers.

The signing of the Treaty of 1833, which provided that the Indians (except Leopold Pokagon's band, which because of Pokagon's influence was allowed to remain), must relinquish their ancestral homes here and move to the west, commenced the writing of the darkest pages in American history and resulted in the Indians' being driven, sometimes at the point of bayonets, from their homes to a new and strange land in the west.

The Treaty of 1821 was signed at Chicago in August by General Cass, representing the United States, and Topenebee, Weesaw and fifty-three other Potawatomie chiefs and head men representing the Indians. By its provisions the Indians ceded to the United States all of the present County of Van Buren and all that part of Berrien which lies east and north of the St. Joseph River, with some exceptions. Besides these, it embraced nine entire counties and parts of five other counties, all in the southwest part of Michigan, and a strip ten miles south of the Indiana line.

In exchange, the United States agreed to pay $5000 in cash annually for the term of twenty years and to appropriate annually for the term of fifteen years the sum of $1000 to provide the Indians with a farmer, a schoolteacher and a blacksmith, whose shop was to be located on the south side of the St. Joseph River near Niles. About five million acres were thus taken by the government at a cost of about five cents per acre.

This treaty also granted land to some individuals, as follows:

> John Burnett, two sections of land; James Burnett, Abraham Burnett, Rebecca Burnett and Nancy Burnett, each one section of land, they being the children of Kaw Kee Mee, sister of Topenebee, and wife of William Burnett.

The above sections of land were to be laid out on the "north" bank of the St. Joseph River commencing about two miles from the mouth. The land so ceded is actually on the east bank of the river.

The last reservation was to Madeline Bertrand, wife of Joseph Bertrand, one section of land at the Parc Aux Vaches on the northeast side of the River St. Joseph. Further grants of land outside of the County of Berrien were made to Joseph Bertrand, Jr., Benjamin Bertrand, Laurent Bertrand, Theresa Bertrand and Amable Bertrand, children of Madeline Bertrand, each one-half of a section of land at the portage of the Kankakee. These were the half-breed children of trader Joseph Bertrand, Sr.

This treaty granted a square mile of land for mission purposes and soon thereafter Reverend McCoy established Carey Mission on that site.

It might be well to give the reader a glimpse of the methods used by the government officials in order to induce the Indians to sign the various treaties. This policy is clearly shown by a letter dated January 1, 1821, written by Alexander Wolcott, Indian agent at Chicago, addressed to Lewis Cass, which reads as follows:

> To induce the Potawatomies to sell their lands, particularly the district of St. Joseph to which they are much attached, it will be requisite to bribe their chief men by very considerable presents and promises; and that should be done, in part at least, before the period of treating arrives, so that time may be given for its effects to spread through the body of the nation . . . . In short, it appears to me that a small portion of the sum appropriated to the treaty can be disposed of in the best and most efficient manner in conciliating and securing before hand the principal men of the nation.

Cass, in reply, expressed his approval of this plan.[1] While Governor Cass in this case was following the practices of the times, his record shows he always endeavored to deal fairly with the Indians.

Two letters from E. Reed to Governor Cass, of July 25th and July 31st, 1828, a short time before the signing of the Carey Mission Treaty on September 20th of the same year, clearly indicate that the officials sent agents to the Indian villages, a sort of pre-election campaign, to influence the Indians to sign the different treaties. These letters also give interesting information regarding some of the local citizens and are quoted in full, including a map of the lower St. Joseph Valley.*

> Carey, St. Joseph, July 25, 1828
>
> Sir:
>
> I received your letter dated 22d June by Mr. Silliman. Since that time I have visited all the Indian lodges on

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*Discovered in National Archives at Washington by Mr. Amos Green and quoted with his approval.

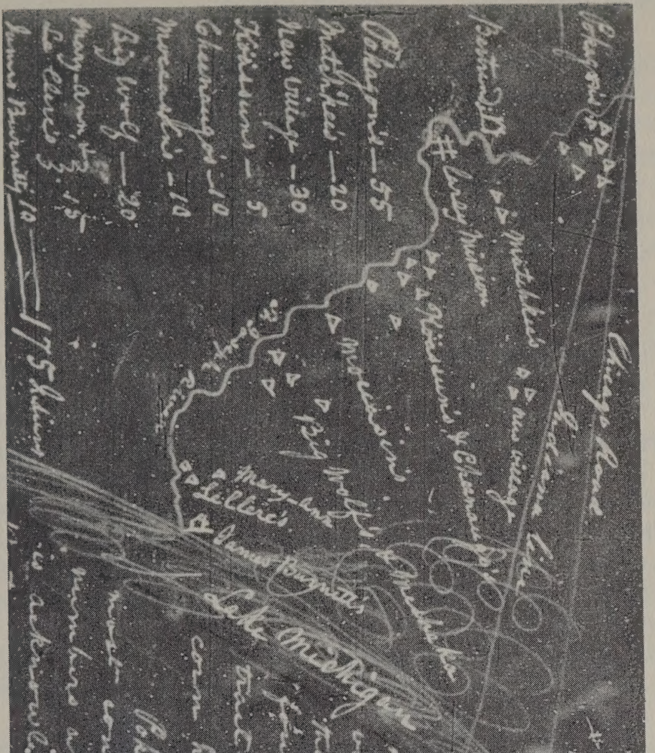
the tract intended to be purchased in September. On the 5th July I was at the house of Mr. Bertrand who had just returned from Detroit. He informed me that he should hold a council with the Indians in a few days by your authority for the purpose of persuading them to sell their land. He did not say when or where the council would be held and, evidently, did not wish me to be present.

From the 5th to the 16th of July I was engaged in performing a tour along the St. Joseph from Carey to the lake. The Indians uniformly said they wished to see Governor Cass, that they wished to keep small reservations for each family, to have provision made in the treaty for supplying them with cattle, farming implements and a certain number of days labor in plowing and fencing. I did not perceive the least unwillingness to sell, but, on the contrary, they appear pleased with the prospect of getting something for a tract of land which is to them of little or no value as a hunting ground.

On the 19th, as I was on my way to Terre Coupie, I stopped at Mr. Bertrand's and found him in council with the Indians. Koassun, Matchkee, young Cheebas, young Topenabet, Pokagon and other young Indians to the number of eleven were present. Pokagon did not appear while I remained though he was in the house. I requested Bertrand to proceed with the council and he informed me that he had finished and the Indians had promised to give him an answer in three days.

On the 20th I sent a Frenchman to appear at Koassun's accidently and question him respecting the council held the day before. There were three of the chiefs who attended present and they evaded every question that could lead to a disclosure of the counsel they had received. I have no doubt that Bertrand charged them to be silent respecting it.

The people here universally believe that Bertrand advised the Indians not to sell. My opinion is that he is well aware that the treaty will be effected and his object now is to induce the Indians to hold out for a great price and to do the best he can for himself and family in the way of getting reservations.


Chicago Road
Indiana Line
Pokagon's
Bertrand
Carey Mission
Matchkee's
new village
Köässuns & Cheenaugo's
moccasin's
Big Wolf's
Meshaka
Mary-Ann
Le Clerc's
James Burnett's
St. Joseph's River
Lake Michigan
Pokagon's — 55
Matchkee's — 20
New Village — 30
Köässuns — 5
Cheenaugo's — 10
Moccasin's — 10
Big Wolf — 20
Mary-Ann's 3
Le Clerc's 3 15
James Burnett's 10 — 175 Indians

The estimate of the number of Indians living at each village, is far too low. I have put down the number estimated when I visited them. I am assured that there are not less than four to five hundred on this tract. That is, who raise their corn here, and call it their home.

Pokagon's village is by far the most considerable, in respect to numbers and character. Pokagon is acknowledged to be a war-chief.

It is customary to print maps with the upper part to the north. It should be noted that the top of this map is on the south of the lands shown. (Courtesy The National Archives Library, Washington, D.C.)

James Burnett expects to get all the land reserved to him which lies below Le Clere's. This includes the point on which the town must be built and is worth one-fifth as much as the whole tract. The following are all the prominent villages on this tract. It is estimated to contain between 4 and 500,000 acres, by far the most valuable land ever purchased by the government in Michigan.

The estimate of the number of Indians living at each village is far too low. I have put down the number estimated when I visited them. I am assured that there are not less than four to five hundred on this tract, that is, who raise their corn here and call it their home. Pokagon's Village is by far the most considerable in respect to numbers and character. Pokagon is acknowledged to be a war chief. Bertrand got him partially acknowledged as a village chief and he is much under B's influence, being indebted to him. He acquired much consequence also by having young Topenebet, the acknowledged heir of the Chieftainship, residing in his family and acting as regent during his minority.

Matchkee is of no account. Koassun is a war chief, rather respectable, but says nothing in council. His son Shagesakshuk is the speaker.

Cheenaugo and the others in that vicinity are of no account. They will follow the advice of Koassun. Moccasin is of no account, but as he has a large family the Indians wish to give him a reservation to include his fishery.

Big Wolf is a very respectable Indian, said to be the best hunter in the tribe. He is allowed to have some influence, but is no speaker.

LeClere* (half-breed) will favor the views of the government and expects a reservation.

James Burnett is now making a tour among the Indians, probably to persuade them to insist upon ceding to him the tract at the mouth of the river. What other counsels he gives them I have not yet learnt.

Mouth of St. Joseph,
July 31, 1828

Bertrand has had another council with the Indians last week. I am now fully satisfied that he does not, as is supposed by all the people here, advise the Indians not to sell, but merely to insist upon giving him certain tracts, to reserve a large tract for themselves opposite to his place and drive a good bargain with the government. I think I cannot be mistaken that this is the amount of his advice to them. However, as he is the Tallyrand of this county and very mysterious in small matters, if anything further comes to light, will inform you of it.

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*This must have been a son of Antoine LeClere.

I have just learnt the object of Burnett's council at Pokagons. Bertrand has prevailed on some of the Indians to agree to give him a reservation at the mouth of the river and that vexed Burnett so much that he has been sober nearly a week. It may perhaps prove a lucky accident that they are both so eager for this place, for it may have a tendency to reconcile both of them as well as the Indians to cede it to the government. It will be a misfortune to the country if any reservation is made at this place and Bertrand has no color of a claim. Were the government to divide this point into town lots and sell it judiciously, in five years it would pay more than double the expense of the treaty, including a liberal annuity for 30 years.

The only people here who have any real influence with the Indians are the old traders Bertrand, Coquillard and Navarre.* I think they will ultimately agree to give the same council to the Indians. I have told them that if they will do this and will favor the views of the government, I would write to you requesting that they be permitted to furnish a part of the goods that may be wanted at the treaty. I told them at the same time that I was not authorized to give them any assurance. The Indians have got a wild notion of asking a large sum for this tract, the same annuities that are paid to the Miamies, etc. Bertrand and others assure me that the American settlers here have persuaded them of the great value of this tract and advised them to hold out for a high price.

Mr. McCoy is very anxious to be at the treaty for the purpose of getting pay for his improvements here and

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*Navarre at one time was a trader at Fort St. Joseph. He and Coquillard later had trading posts at South Bend, Indiana.

> will return as early in September as he can. He desired me to write you to that effect.
> With highest respect sir,
>
> Yr ob svt
>
> E. Reed[2]
>
> His Excellency Governor Cass

James Burnett was addicted to the use of liquor to such a degree that his contest with Bertrand must have been of great importance to him to cause him to remain sober for a whole week. The point of land mentioned was probably on the south side of the river at its mouth. Reed was a witness to the signing of the Carey Mission Treaty.

The Treaty of September 20, 1828, at Carey Mission granted to the government land from the mouth of the St. Joseph River to near "Macousin village," just north of Buchanan, "then to the nineteenth mile tree, on the northern boundary line of Indiana, thence west to Lake Michigan and then along the shore of Lake Michigan to the place of beginning," containing upwards of one million acres.[3]

The Chicago Treaty of 1833, signed by Topenebee, Pokagon, Weesaw and forty-five other chiefs and head men, granted all of the remaining land owned by the Indians and consisted of about five million acres,[4] including, among others, the sites of Pokagon's, Topenebee's and Weesaw's villages, and further provided that the Indians must move away within three years. That spelled the doom of the red man in southwestern Michigan.[5]

The reader can obtain a slight idea of the value of this immense acreage when it is known that only three hundred twenty acres laid out in town lots in St. Joseph were, in 1836, taxed at the valuation of one and a half million dollars.[6]

It is quietly rumored that many real estate brokers in this vicinity are despondent because they were born one hundred years too late, and as a result, were unable to collect the regular sales commission on the greatest land deal ever transacted in southwestern Michigan.

REFERENCES

References are cited by author's name. See Bibliography for title and publication data.

1. Quaife (4), 346f.

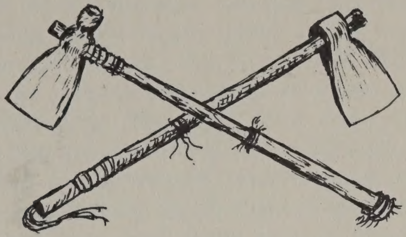
2. *The National Archives.*

3. Tipton Papers, II, 109.

4. Tipton Papers, III, 16.

5. McKee (1), 27; see also Letters of Benjamin M. Petit, "The Trail of Death," *Indiana Historical Society,* XIV (No. 1, 1941), 29-113; McDonald, 48-49.

6. John M. Gordon, (No. 3, 1959), 292.



CHAPTER TEN

Carey Mission

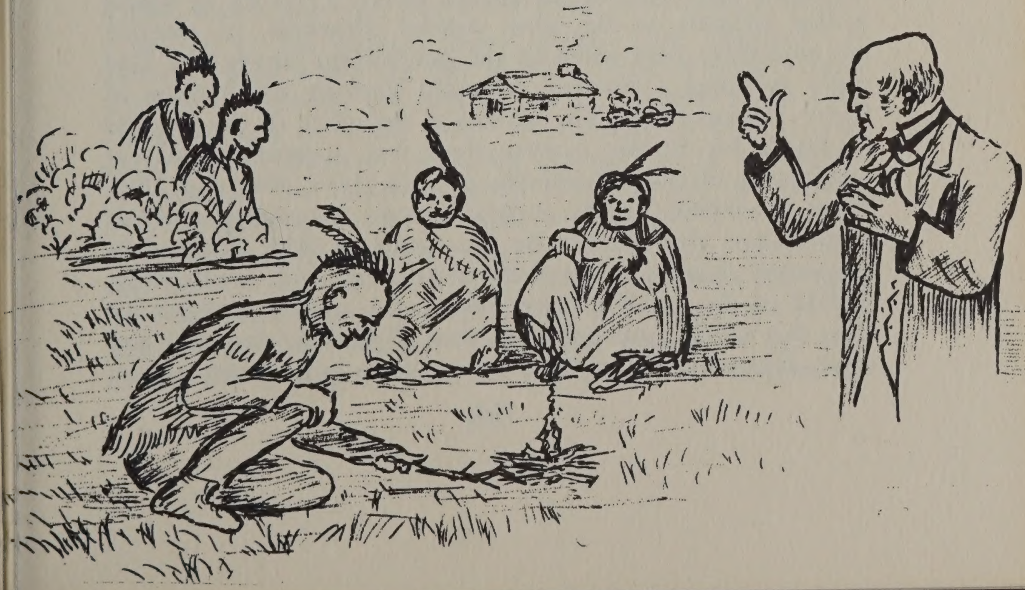
The establishment of this Mission had an important effect on the lower St. Joseph Valley. After the forced withdrawal of the Jesuits, visits by the Black Robes were intermittent, because of the scarcity of priests and on account of the vast area to be traveled. McCoy decided the Indian should not only have religious training but should also be taught the white man's methods of living because it was evident that his days of depending upon hunting to secure his subsistence would soon be over.

This Mission also resulted in establishing a more permanent and stable community and was a very definite encouragement for the coming of white settlers. Indeed, the coming of the settlers was the eventual cause of the mission's removal. It was the first systematic attempt by Protestants to convert and teach the Indians.

Carey Mission was the first Baptist mission in the State of Michigan. It was named after a prominent Baptist missionary, then in Hindustan. The founder was Isaac McCoy, who was born in 1784 at Uniontown, Pennsylvania. His parents moved to Kentucky in 1789.

In 1803 he married Christiana Polk, whose mother and at least one of her sisters had been captured by the Ottawa Indians. Christiana was well liked by the Indians. She had great influence over them and was a great help to her husband in the management of the mission. On one occasion her condition required medical attention which could not be had in the wilderness, so on June 25th she set out from Fort Wayne with three young children in a canoe for a trip of three or four hundred miles in the wilderness. She spent nine days on the river. It rained so much that their clothing was mildewed. On September 14th she returned by horseback, carrying her new-born baby. During these years, McCoy made many trips to Detroit, Washington and other places, and while he was away, Mrs. McCoy took charge of the school and mission. They had fourteen children, eleven of whom died during the time their parents were missionaries, five having died while McCoy was away from home.

He was licensed as a minister in 1804 and preached as a missionary in Indiana. In 1819 he opened a school with only six pupils in attendance, and in 1820 started another school in Fort Wayne. In June of 1821 he journeyed to the St. Joseph Valley and met with some of the Indian chiefs, Topenebee being one, and discussed with them the plan of opening a school near Niles for Indian children. The plan was approved.



McCoy then began negotiations to include in the Chicago Treaty to be signed August 29, 1821, provisions for land to be ceded for his proposed mission. He was successful in having the treaty provide, among other things, that a square mile of land on the south side of the St. Joseph river

> within the Indian lands not ceded, should be selected under the direction of the President, upon which the blacksmiths and teachers employed shall reside.

Correspondence with the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, and with the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs, did not disclose that the President of the United States ever set aside a square mile of land for this mission.

McCoy, however, states that "The Potawatomies gave a square mile of land for mission premises."[1] Shortly after this, the site was located on the south side of the river about one mile west of Niles. Some question has arisen as to the exact location of the site of Carey Mission. Ellis states that the site selected was on the western boundary of the present City of Niles.[2] Later, he writes that the mission itself was located near the river, east of the mission tract, for purposes of trade with the Indians.[3]

Most of the histories written about Carey Mission after 1880 simply repeat statements from Hungerford's *History of Niles Township*, included in Ensign's *History of Berrien and Van Buren Counties*. Hungerford most certainly obtained his information from the original source, McCoy's *History of Baptist Indian Missions*, as did other writers. However, no mention has heretofore been made of the government survey and field notes including a drawing definitely showing the location of Carey Mission Field. The records in the office of the Register of Deeds for Berrien County show that government surveys were made of Niles Township in 1828, 1835, 1842 and 1845. Noah Brookfield, deputy surveyor, made one survey in 1842, twelve years after the mission was closed in 1830. Fortunately this survey shows a sketch of the mission tract with one building. Instead of the building being east of the mission as stated by Ellis, this building was north and west. Estimating the north and south dimensions by scaling the map of the government survey, it would appear that the Mission Field described by Brookfield contained about seventy-seven acres.

The east and west section line is now Grant Street. The north and south dimensions of the tract are not shown. There are no records in the abstract office before 1834. What scanty records there are show that Henry Coolidge received a quit claim deed to the northwest quarter of Section 34 in 1835 from Moses Finch. This was University land which had been sold by the State of Michigan prior to that date. The land north of the Mission Field parcel is now platted as Mission Hills, and the land south is platted as Hill Park Estates.

On October 8, 1822, McCoy with twenty-one other persons set out from Fort Wayne for the new mission with two ox wagons, one four-horse wagon, two milch cows, and arrived at what later became the mission on October 19th. In a short time six log houses were completed, four for dwellings, one for school and one for a blacksmith shop.

On November 11, 1822, McCoy left for Fort Wayne and on December 9 returned with thirty-two persons, three wagons drawn by oxen, one wagon drawn by horses, five cows and fifty hogs. Imagine driving fifty hogs that distance through a wilderness! On January 27, 1823, the school was opened with thirty Indian children in attendance.

In September of 1830, when it became apparent that the mission would no longer be needed because of the plan to transport the Indians to the west, an appraisal which had been provided for in the Treaty of Carey Mission on September 20, 1828, of the improvements and crops was made and it was estimated the crops were worth $641.50 and the buildings $5,080, which sums were paid to the Board of Missions at Boston.

Because of the Mission, many settlers were attracted and moved to what is now the City of Niles. Most of them brought whiskey to trade to the Indians. As few Indians could resist the temptation to drink, many were drunk as long as they could procure whiskey. After the Chicago Treaty was signed, for example, the Indians received seven barrels of whiskey. Ten murders occurred in the space of twenty-four hours.

On Sunday, May 22, 1832 (some say May 27th), a conference was held in a grove near Carey Mission between the aged Leopold Pokagon and General Brown and his officers of the Third Brigade of Michigan Militia. The purpose of this conference was to promote good will among the Potawatomies and also to learn if the Potawatomies could defend themselves against the Sacs and Kickapoos under Black Hawk. Pokagon assured the General that they would not go to war, but would endeavor to defend themselves if attacked. He was assured by the General that they would be protected by the whites as long as they remained at peace.[4] Joseph Bertrand acted as interpreter at this meeting.

Another interesting sidelight on Carey Mission is that B. W. and Moses Finch filed a claim of $500 with the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for their services in ferrying the Potawatomie Indians, on the Carey Mission Reserve, across the St. Joseph River at Niles from the fall of 1830 to the spring of 1832, under a verbal contract with the sub-agent for the Indians, Colonel James Stewart.[5]

McCoy decided it was best for the Indians to move away where they could again have lands of their own and be freed from the temptations of the white man. In 1838 a meeting was held on the Carey Mission grounds with those remaining Indians, then estimated to be only one hundred fifty. They prayed to be allowed to remain, but without success, and so began the first "death march." Because of Chief Leopold Pokagon's power, determination and influence, his band was not required to leave for the west.

In spite of all the obstacles and indifference, and often hostility of the Indians, and lack of interest of the Baptist Mission Board which furnished McCoy with meager funds, Carey Mission was considered one of the most successful and flourishing Indian missions, and perhaps its standing was the cause of the government's granting, in the Treaty of 1826, a quarter section of land to each of fifty-eight Indians who were then, or had been, pupils at Carey Mission. This land was to be located under the direction of the President of the United States.

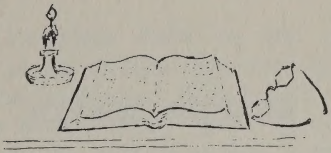
James Burnett, son of William Burnett the trader, and the daughters of Joseph Bailey attended Carey Mission.[6]

McCoy, even under the most trying conditions, and ill much of the time, kept a voluminous diary. His history is filled with the tales of Indian murders, the sickness of himself and wife, deaths of his children and the privations the early missionaries were forced to undergo. It was a most courageous band that established Carey Mission.

McCoy died on June 21, 1846. Concerning his death, Wythe, who published a book about Isaac McCoy, wrote:

> He left the world with his face towards the Indian Country. His ruling idea was supreme in death. Rising above all ordinary considerations, this hero of the wilderness and the camp, not forgetting the objects of his sufferings, nor ignoring the importance of that to which he had devoted his manhood and sacrificed his all, passed from this life to the next with this message on his lips: "Tell the brethren to never let the Indian Mission decline."

And so ended the life of a great Christian, who ignored comfort, safety and health and braved the dangers of the wilderness to educate and lift up a people that could not help themselves.[7]



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1. McCoy, 113.
2. Ellis, 37.
3. Ellis, 153.
4. Weissert, 119-120
5. Lyon (1), 501.
6. *Berrien County Record.*
7. McCoy, 110-228; see also Barnes; Lyons.

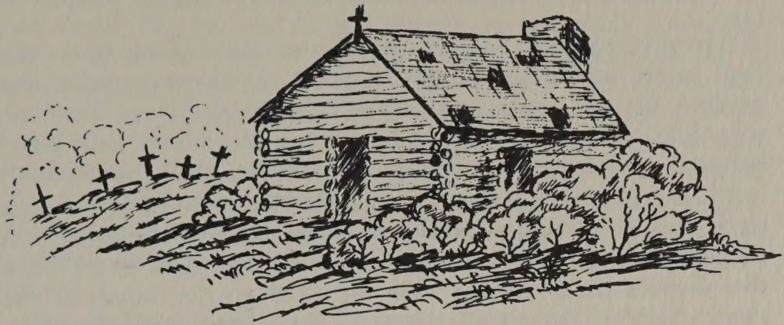
CHAPTER ELEVEN

Mission at Berrien Springs

One mission that has nearly escaped the attention of historians was located on the bluff on the west side of the St. Joseph River at Berrien Springs. The best reference to this mission is found in the field notes of the United States Government Survey made by Lucius Lyon, deputy government surveyor, certified on February 13, 1830.[1]

When Lyon was running a survey along the east bank of the river at a point where the east and west line between Sections 18 and 19, Oronoko Township, crossed the river, thence following the meander line of the river to the tenth bearing, he made the following notation in the field notes:

> Opposite on west bank is the old French Mission; we can see the antiquated crosses designating one of those places appointed for all living – whence they came, what they did, and whither they are gone God only knows.



A survey of meanders made on the west bank of the river commences at the section line and follows the meander line to between the fourth and fifth bearing. At this point the field notes of the survey state, "Enter at six (chains) a bluff thirty-five feet high, the site of an old Jesuit Mission."

If one goes east on the present Main Street in Berrien Springs to the river bluff, he will have crossed the mission grounds and cemetery a short distance west of the bluff. The mission was five hundred twenty feet south of the section line.[2]

The mission was on both sides of what later became Main Street. Now the north part of the mission grounds is occupied by dwellings and the south side is known as Indian Fields Park. In an anonymous manuscript written by a Catholic priest stationed at Bertrand, probably in 1847, no mention is made of such mission, but he was writing mostly of missions then in existence and this mission had been abandoned before the date of the government survey in 1830.[3]

Edward J. Stevens, a civil engineer, who worked with Dr. Hinsdale in preparing the *Archaeological Atlas of Michigan* and who drew all the maps for that publication, had this to say about this mission:

> On a map of 1719, evidently redrawn from Lahontan's map which was published in London in 1703, it shows a Mascoutin village and a "Aouiahonons" (probably a Wea) village, near together on the easterly side of the river in the vicinity of where Fort St. Joseph subsequently was built and another village on the west side of the

> river about halfway between the site of LaSalle's fort and the mouth of the river and the site of Fort St. Joseph.

Stevens attempted to plat the site of the mission from the field notes, but admitted that because the starting point was covered by the waters of Lake Chapin it could not be done accurately. He placed the site on the top of a bluff "some place between a continuation southerly of Main and Mechanic Streets."

Stevens also stated that the peculiar location of the Indian trails through Oronoko Township would indicate that there was an Indian village at Berrien Springs at an early date. There were two distinct trails running from the south to the mouth of the river. Both of these trails were on the west side of the river. The east trail followed in a general direction the present road north from Buchanan and along the west side of the river until it reached a short distance west of the southwest corner of Section 26, Oronoko Township, then it ran nearly north for three and a half miles and then took a general direction of the highway to St. Joseph. On this trail and commencing near the northwest corner of Section 26, there was a trail in the shape of a loop going northeast to the site of Berrien Springs and thence northwest to meet the main trail. This would indicate that there was once a fairly large village at this site before Chief Wolf had a small settlement there.[4] This thought is borne out by an anonymous memorandum in the University of Michigan Museum at Ann Arbor where the following note is found relating to this mission:

> Stones of corners still to be seen.
> Trading post supposed to be located near here.

In 1832 the threat of war by Chief Black Hawk was a serious menace to the inhabitants of the St. Joseph Valley. Consternation ran rampant and the militia was called to mobilize at Niles. The country was filled with the wildest rumors. When the men joined the militia, the women and children were left with no protection. The hardy wives of Volinia Township, Cass County, commenced to build a stockade near Charlston, then a village, but the war ended before the fort was finished.[5] It became necessary to send a messenger from Niles to the mouth of the St. Joseph River with a request that the boats there be held to transport the militia to Chicago.

Tom Huston, a boy of fifteen years of age, was selected to carry the word to St. Joseph. The story is told of how he performed the journey to St. Joseph on horseback and then started back to Niles in a terrific storm. (Berrien County is not lacking for a Paul Revere!) It is stated that he reached the river bank opposite Berrien Springs and it seemed hours before he succeeded in attracting the attention of the men at the post, but at last they heard him and a man came in a boat and took him across to the safety of the log cabin which stood at the base of the bluff beside the river. This is additional proof of the existence of at least a post at Berrien Springs.

The incident of Charlevoix almost being shot when he was mistaken by one of his own party for a bear is related in the chapter on Fort St. Joseph. This could well have happened at or near Berrien Springs. Charlevoix related that his party reached the mouth of the St. Joseph River on August 6, 1721, very late, or very early on the seventh. It took his party two days to reach Fort St. Joseph, so on the night this incident occurred, he could not have been very far from Berrien Springs, as that place is about halfway between St. Joseph and Niles. Charlevoix makes no mention of a post or mission at Berrien Springs when he passed there in 1721, so we are safe in concluding that there were no buildings visible from the river.

About 1894 when the employees of the Village of Berrien Springs were excavating gravel nearby the mission grounds they found sixteen mounds, each the size of a single grave, containing skeletons. Small stones had been placed over each grave. Some pottery was also found, with trade goods and prayer beads.*

One of the early settlers of Berrien Springs was Dr. Lyman A. Barnard. During the spring of 1832 he built a small sloop, in Cass County, christened it the "Dart" and hauled it across the country with an ox team to what is now Niles and launched it on the St. Joseph River and floated it to Lake Michigan, where he rigged it out and sailed between St. Joseph and Chicago for eight months. That was doing it the hard way![7]

This was not such a difficult undertaking compared with the floating of the Bertrand Tavern downstream to Berrien Springs where it served as the Kephart Drug Store, and later as a hotel.[8]

***Interview with Lewis E. Kephart**

Another reference to the existence of a fort at Berrien Springs is made by Turner. He states:

> Berrien Springs is the capital (sic) of the County. It occupies the site of an old French fort on the St. Joseph River, some ten miles below Niles and fifteen miles from the mouth of the river.[9]

Unfortunately, no authority is cited. It should be noted that Turner was not quite accurate in the distances given. Perhaps the word "fort" was loosely used, because in the early days one or two log cabins were often designated as a fort.

REFERENCES

References are cited by author's name. See Bibliography for title and publication data.

1. Lyon (2), 195.
2. This site has been established by the means of a co-ordinated plat with the meander of the St. Joseph River drawn by Joseph Wilkinson and by measurements on Bellinger's Annexed Addition, Plat to the Village of Berrien Springs (1838), scaled by Amos Green.
3. Anonymous manuscript at Notre Dame, Indiana, 1847.
4. Edward J. Stevens, personal correspondence.
5. Schoetzaw, 17.
6. Ballard (1), 80-83.
7. Jerome, 208.
8. Coolidge (1), 207.
9. Turner, 78.

CHAPTER TWELVE

Early Transportation on the St. Joseph River

The earliest use of this waterway was by the Indians in their canoes. At the end of the trapping season they would load their bark canoes, some of which were of great size, with furs and paddle to the nearest trader. A brisk traffic of this kind was carried on as early as 1700.

Later, after settlements sprung up along the river, the need of some means to sell surplus products increased. Then, as earlier, the waterways furnished the easiest means of transportation as there were no roads such as we know them today, and only trails through the woods and marshes.

One traveler in 1826 visited the mouth of the St. Joseph River. He stated that he crossed the river near its mouth in a canoe by means of a rope tied to each bank. Only one or two persons could cross at a time. The canoe was fastened to the rope in such a way that a passenger could draw himself across the river, and a small cord was fastened to one end of the canoe so it could be drawn back for another load.[1]

The St. Joseph River was traveled as far upstream as Union City, a distance of one hundred seventy-five miles, for transporting grain, lumber and timber downstream and the produce needed by the settlers upstream. The Paw Paw River was navigable for small keel boats as far as Paw Paw, Michigan.

Cowles writes that after the canoe, pirogues came into use. These were canoes thirty to forty feet long, dug out from the largest whitewood trees. They were capable of carrying a cargo of two or three tons. The usual freight for one pirogue was about twenty-five barrels of pork or corn meal.[2]

After the pirogues came the "arks." They were square wooden boxes in which grain was shipped. They were used for one trip downstream and when they reached the mouth of the river were abandoned or sold for $1.50, the then prevailing price. They were built of two-inch clear whitewood planks with sides about four feet high. Sometimes as many as six of these boxlike arks were fastened together, one behind the other. The current furnished the only power.[3]

Later, when the need of transportation became greater, scows and keel boats were constructed. These keel boats were made of heavy two-inch oak planks and some were eighty feet long. They were used for traffic upstream as well as down. The current furnished the power for the downstream trip, for all that the crew had to do was to keep the boat in the channel, but the upstream trip was one of exhausting labor. The usual crew consisted of seven to nine men. The captain acted as steersman with six to eight men doing the poling. On the upstream trip, four men poled from each side, going back and

forth on running boards projecting over the water from the sides of the boat. The first man would go to the bow of the boat and face downstream, or towards the stern. He would shove his pole in the bottom of the river and start walking ahead until he came to the stern. He would then withdraw his pole and again go to the bow. The other crew members would follow in his footsteps and so pushed the heavy boat upstream. According to tradition, it was sometimes necessary to hitch a yoke or two of oxen to the larger keel boats, or arks, to haul them upstream at the grand daddy riffle located about two miles above Niles.[4]

Still later, about 1833, steamboats took over and often towed four or five keel boats upstream at one time. Niles was served by steamers from Buffalo and Chicago.[5] One of the last steamboats to travel the lower St. Joseph was the *Mae Graham*, named after Mr. Graham's daughter. This boat was piloted by Captain Fikes, who was loved by all with whom he came in contact. The *Mae Graham* carried supplies to many summer resorts and glass-blowers camps along the river until the *Tourist*, the last of that decade, took over. Both of these boats were occasionally stuck for hours on sand bars. With the advent of the interurban railroad from Benton Harbor to Dowagiac, the traffic on the river gradually lessened and the *Tourist* no longer was needed.

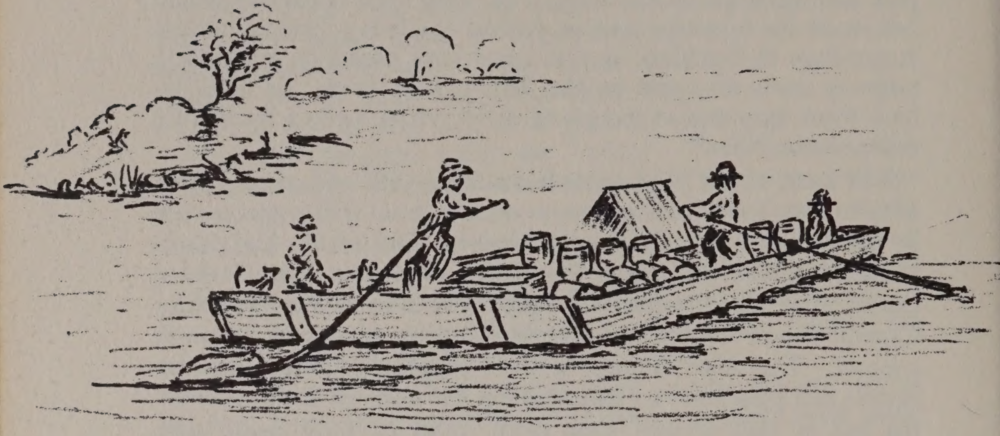
In those days the beautiful St. Joseph River was considered one of the best small-mouth bass streams in this part of the country, and many fishermen from surrounding states came to try their luck. As stated in Chapter VII, in 1839 the river at Bertrand was two hundred eighty feet wide, and in general a broader, deeper and swifter stream than it is today.

To those who have had the pleasure of drifting down this beautiful river in a silent canoe, it seems fitting and proper to add the description of the kindly St. Joseph poet who so lovingly wrote of its charms:

Where the bumblebee sips and the clover is red,
And the zephyrs come laden with peachblow perfume,
Where the thistle-down pauses in search of the rose
And the myrtle and woodvine and wild ivy grows;
Where the catbird pipes up and it sounds most divine
Off there in the branches of some lonely pine;

Oh, give me the spot that I once used to know
By the side of the placid old River St. Joe!

— Ben King[6]



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2. Cowles, 44.
3. Knoblock, 185-200; see also Buley, 413-440; Fox (5), 75-80.
4. Fox (3), 32.
5. Gordon, Leon M. II, 284-289.
6. King, 36.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

St. Joseph Harbor

In the early days, because the waves of Lake Michigan caused a sand bar to form where the river emptied into the lake, no large vessel could enter the river. In order to ship lumber or other commodities, it was necessary to load them on scows and float them across the sand bar where they were transferred to the boats anchored outside and, of course, this could be done only in fair weather when there was no sea running.

To Captain Hinkley goes the record of being the first to cross this sand bar in the schooner *Savage*. In the fall of 1827 his boat was caught in a gale and he was forced to seek shelter at the mouth of the river. He anchored outside the sand bar and the vessel swung with her stern towards the bar. Each wave carried her nearer and Captain Hinkley took advantage of the heavy sea and let out the anchor cable as each wave struck the boat and in that manner "jumped" it over the bar. As the last wave bounded the *Savage* free of the bar, he slipped the cable and the vessel entered the quiet water of the river, stern first.[1]

As previously stated, the St. Joseph River flowed west until just below the railroad bridge when it turned southerly around the foot of the bluff towards the location of the present railway station, and then continued in a southwesterly direction and flowed into Lake Michigan. A lighthouse was built on the bluff next to the Memorial Building on Lake Boulevard in 1831 just west of the mouth of the river.

Congress, in 1835, appropriated $26,000 to improve the harbor and one year later the first piers were constructed and then the sand between the piers was removed by the use of teams of horses hauling scrapers until the water flowed into the new channel and began to wash away the sand bar at the mouth of the river. Both piers have from time to time since been improved and increased to their present length.

In 1843 St. Joseph was the most important shipping post in Michigan with the exception of Detroit, and at one time (1842) more wheat and flour were shipped from the port of St. Joseph than from the port of Chicago.[2]

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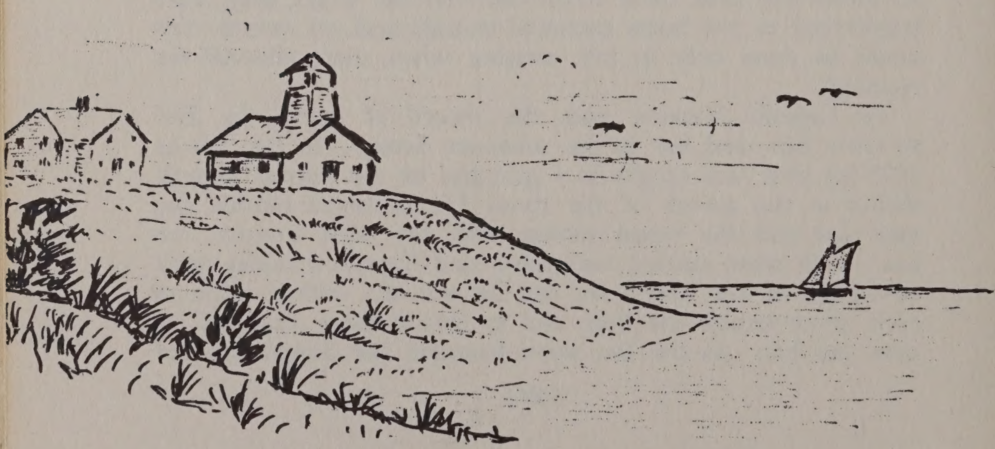
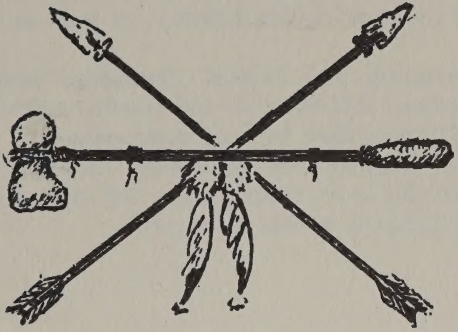




CONCLUSION

From the prehistoric age of possibly 20,000 years ago, down through the proto-historic and historic periods, this area has been rich in history and persons who dwelt here have taken an important part in historical events of national importance.

The writer has enjoyed endeavoring to pick out from the great number of books of general history those events which occurred close to home.

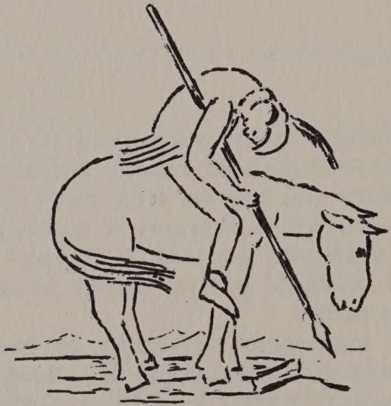
It may be of interest to the reader to know that nearly two hundred books and manuscripts have been examined and searched for records of purely local events and local characters and those facts channeled to the proper chapter.

This search has led the writer, by auto, to the libraries of Kalamazoo, South Bend, Notre Dame University, Chicago Historical Society, Burton Historical Collection of the Detroit Public Library, The William L. Clements Library of Ann Arbor, Michigan, the Seminaire de Quebec, Canada; Michigan State Library, Lansing, and the University of Michigan Historical

Collections at Ann Arbor; by mail to the Daughters of the American Revolution Library at Washington, D. C.; Wisconsin Historical Society, Milwaukee; Newberry Library at Chicago; Kansas Historical Society, Topeka; St. Mary's College, St. Marys, Kansas; St. Mary's College, South Bend; The New York Historical Society, New York City; Indiana Historical Bureau at Indianapolis; The U.S. Department of Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs; The U.S. Department of Interior, Bureau of Land Management; The National Archives Library; The War Department and the Smithsonian Library, as well as many private libraries.

Untold interesting and helpful discussions have been held with many persons interested in and familiar with local history and their suggestions have been of great value.

If the reader obtains some enjoyment, however slight, from the contents of this small volume, that will be sufficient reward for the many pleasant hours of research.



The following legend and other stories were written by Simon Pokagon and printed on birch-bark booklets by C. H. Engle of Hartford, Michigan, publisher of Pokagon's works, and are now collectors' items.

ALGONQUIN LEGENDS OF PAW PAW LAKE

by

Simon Pokagon

Many, many hundred years ago, tradition as sacred to us as Holy Writ to the white man, tells us that Paw Paw Lake was a bay at the extreme western limit of a great inland lake called by the Indians Ki-tchi-git-a-gan, meaning an earthly Paradise.

This great lake filled the valley of the Paw Paw River a canoe day's journey toward the rising sun; and further they tell us it extended from the foothills just south of the present site of Hartford Village to the foothills just north of where Bangor Village is now located.

At that time Rush Lake and Swan Lake, now called Van Auken Lake, were bays connected with this large body of water on the north.

One of the largest Indian villages then known was built around this bay on the side toward the setting sun.

This village was called Waw-Kwin (Heaven), a Happy Hunting Ground. Near by it was a tribal camping ground. The great trail of all the northern and western tribes passed this place to and from the great prairie beyond Lake Michigan.

It was indeed an important place. Elk, buffalo, bear and deer in their autumn and spring migrations either north or south passed around the western limit of this great body of water; while un-numbered millions of wild pigeons in early springtime filled all the trees in the big forest with their nests, extending west to Lake Michigan and northward sometimes beyond the Black River.

This wonderful lake swarmed with fish and ducks, geese and swan floated in clouds upon its waters. In fact, this ancient tribe was living in the lap of ease and luxury. One night in early spring, they were aroused from their slumbers at midnight by a strange roaring sound, such as they had never heard before.

At first they thought it might be thunder, but as no lightning flashed across the sky they concluded it must be an oncoming cyclone, yet that did not seem possible as not a cloud was anywhere to be seen. Finally they started in the direction of the strange roaring sound, men, women and children, followed by a multitude of dogs, whining and cringing as they had never done before. Moving cautiously southward they finally reached the headlands north of where the Village of Watervliet now stands, and gazing into the valley beneath, they saw by the feeble light of the moon that the shore at the outlet of their beautiful lake, which for ages had held it fast, had given way and a deluge of water, roaring like a whirlwind, was sweeping down great trees and rocks toward Lake Michigan.

When morning came they beheld where Lake Sa-gi-a-gan lay when the sun went down, like an infant sleeping in its mother's arms, a dark, roily stream which appeared like some monstrous snake pushing its way through slime and mud, boiling on either side with struggling fish. Turning from the revolting sight with saddened hearts, they returned to their village. Here they found to their surprise the bay had receded a bow's shot from their canoes that lay the night before in circles around the shore and their beautiful bay had changed into a lake as it now appears.

Coming to a more recent date, when our tribe, the Potawatomies, took possession of southern Michigan, it may be interesting to know that we called Paw Paw Lake 'Sa-bi-na-go-na,' meaning 'it swallows the river in storm and spews it out in sunshine.' This name was given because in wet weather the river runs into the outlet of the lake and in a dry time it runs out at the same place into the river again. Hence the name from the Algonquin words meaning swallow and vomit. Indians in naming their children always gave some reason for the name, and in naming places the same custom is adhered to.

Pokagon does not wish to complain of the white man, yet must admit he longs in his heart, again to behold the bounty of Si-bi-naw-go-naw the O-de-na of his fathers. Here we killed the bear, the elk and the deer. Here we trapped the otter, coon and beaver. But alas our forests have been cut down! Our woodland flowers for want of shade, have faded and died! Our ancient trails cannot be traced! Our fathers' graves have been destroyed, and where our wigwams once stood and our children played, now stand the cottages of the white man. All, all has changed except the sun, moon and stars and they have not because their God and our God in great wisdom and mercy, hung them beyond the white man's reach.

POTTAWATTAMIE BOOK OF GENESIS

Legend of the Creation of Man

Dibangimowin Pottawattamie
Ejitodwin Anunishnawbe

There is an old tradition among our people dimly seen through the mists of time, that Kiji Manito (The Great Spirit) after he had created nomash (the fish) of nibinong (the waters) and b-nes-sig (the fowls) of no-din (the air) and mo-naw-to-auk (the beasts) of a-ki (the land) His works still failed to satisfy the grand conception of His soul. Hence He called a great Council of man-i-to-og (the spirits) that ruled over land and seas, His agents, and revealed unto them how it was the great desire of Nin-o-daw (His heart) to create a new being that should stand erect upon his hind legs, and to possess the combined intelligence of all the living creatures He had made.

Most of those spirits whom He had permitted to hold dominion over the earth, when they met in the grand Council, encouraged His Divine plans, but Man-i-to-O-gi-maw-og (the spiritual Chiefs) when they considered the great power the proposed being might wield withdrew themselves from the Council, and held a private pow wow of their own, to frustrate, if possible, the plans of How-waw-tick (the Almighty). The loyal Mon-i-tog who remained at the grand Council stood aghast as Ki-ji Man-i-to revealed unto them His Divine plan, explaining the great possibilities that awaited the new creature He had conceived in His heart to create.

The Divine Council was prolonged by debate from the set of sun until morning dawn. Ke-sus (the sun) arose in greater brilliancy than ever before. The Spirits anxiously began to inquire of His Majesty, "How many suns and moons would pass before He could accomplish His wonderful work?" While yet the inquiry hung on ki-o-don-og (their lips) He said unto them, "Follow me." He led them into a great wilderness to Sa-gi-i-gan, a beautiful inland lake, and as He stood upon the shores thereof in the presence of them all, His eyes flashed waw-sawmo-win (lightning!) The lake became boiling water! The earth trembled! He then spake in a voice of thunder: "COME FORTH YE LORDS OF AU KEE (the world)!" The ground opened! and from out of the red clay that lined the lake came forth Au-ne-ne gaie Ik-we (man and woman) like kego (flying fish) from out the water. In the presence of the new born pair all was still as death! A dark cloud hung over the lake! It began to boil again! The awful silence was then broken! The earth shook! And Ki-ji Manito said: "Come forth, ye servants of Au-nish-naw-be (man)! Forth leaped at once from out the lake Ni-ji wa-be gon o-nim-og (a pair of snow-white dogs) and laid down where stood the new made pair kissing their feet and hands.

The bride and groom then each other fondly kissed as hand in hand they stood, in naked innocence, in the full bloom of youth, perfect in make and mould, of body and of limb. Ki-gi-nos maw-kaw mis-taw-kaw (their long black hair) almost reached the ground, which gently waving in nip-nong oden (the morning breeze) in contrast with their rich color, grace and forms erect, outrivaled in beauty all other creatures He had made. They looked all about them in wonder and surprise. Surveyed all living creatures that moved in sight. Gazed upon the towering trees. The grass. The flowers. The lake. The sunshine and the shade. And again each other fondly kissed as their eyes looked love to eyes, with no other language their feelings to express.

At length I-we (the maiden fair) slyly let go Os-ki-nawe o-ning-i-maw (the young man's hand) and stole away into the dark shades and hid, where she might watch to test his love, and learn thereby if his feelings were akin to hers. Long he sought in vain to find his mate, until at length the snow white dogs, following on her track, joyfully howled out: "We have found her."

Now when Mau-tchi Man-i-tog (the Spiritual Chiefs) first learned that Kiji Manito had finished His Crowning works as he had proposed to do, sought diligently for the new made pair until they found them. And as they surveyed the beauty of their forms erect and the surpassing loveliness of body and limb, their wonder and admiration was unbounded. But when they saw the soul of the Divine shining in their faces, like the noonday sun, their hearts were stung through and through by maw-tchi a-mog (the cruel wasps) of envy and jealousy. Hence they resolved in nin o-daw (their hearts) that instead of trying to live in peace with them as they had done with the first creation, they would do all they could to make them discontented, unhappy and miserable.

As time rolled on, the first o-nig-go-maw (parents) and generations after them, began to realize there were mau-tchi dash meno Mandito (bad spirits and good spirits) that exercised dominion over mountains, lakes, streams and plains, and that they were in a measure controlled by them. They also began to learn that au-nish-i-naw-be (man) possessed the nature and the intelligence of all the animal creation; and that he was endowed with a spiritual nature which was given him by mi-si ge-go ga-gi-ji-tod (the Creator of all things) in waw-kwing dash Au-kee (in heaven and on earth). Hence when they were unfortunate in securing game, or unsuccessful in battle, it was all attributed to the bad spirits that held dominion over the country wherein they dwelt.

And when game was plenty, and they were successful in battle, this they contributed to the good spirits that controlled the land in which they lived. Sometimes in order to appease bad spirits, they made offerings of fruits and grains. But they sacrificed animals only to Ki-ji Man-i-to waw-quin (the God of heaven) who alone they recognized as the great Creator and Ruler of all things in heaven and on earth.

Our fathers and mothers in their primeval state did not name their children as do the civilized races, simply as they might be known and designated by them. But when their children were born, whatever animal or bird they imagined they most resembled, they were called by that name, and as strange as it may appear to the white race, in after generations those bearing the name of some animal believed, at least they claimed, to have descended from such animal whose name they bore. It might be maw-qua (the bear), or waw-goosh (the fox) or Mi-gi-si (the eagle). The same rule followed in each individual case. And so it was in succeeding generations, each tribe or clan adopted as their "to-tum" the animal or things whose name the patriarch of the tribe was called when a child.

Sometimes when at war, the animal was taken with them alive, but generally it was painted on a tanned hide and used as white men use their flags.

It was an emblem of royalty as well as a symbol of loyalty, and when engaged in battle a warrior would rather die than surrender his totum.

It matters not how foolish our legends may appear to those races who call themselves civilized, still they were as sacred to us as holy writ to them.

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